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“GROW IN GRACE.”



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E. F. Osborn.

SOME
ESSENTIALS
OF
CHRISTIAN GROWTH

BY
EDWIN FAXON OSBORN.
11

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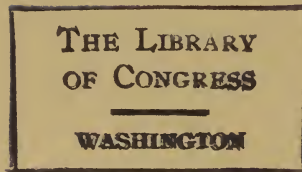
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DEDICATED
WITH FILIAL LOVE
TO
MOTHER.

PREFACE.

In our anxiety to save men's souls do we attend carefully enough to that Christian intelligence and to that strength of Christian character without which a church can not be a united and stable evangelizing power? But if a church is not such an evangelizing power it fails to accomplish its mission. A church was not intended to be an asylum where Christians could be out of danger and at rest. Nor was it intended to be the gate of entrance to the road that leads to Heaven. The churches are the Kingdom of God organized for the purpose of evangelization. A church, then, must not neglect those who are newly baptized into it. Neither must it merely rock their cradle. But it must attend to their growth and to their preparation for Christian service.

If the end of this age were coming in a few months, in the aggregate of souls saved, it would still pay for a church to spend a large proportion of its effort in developing those who have not yet learned to forget themselves in

labor for others. A church of ten intelligent, well developed Christians is a greater evangelizing power than is a church of one hundred members who have been baptized, but who have been left untaught.

These considerations have greatly impressed me with the fact that the churches should give greater attention to the development of the Christian life. I hope my book may call attention to this lack in many of our churches. And, at the same time, I have treated, in the following chapters, a few of the subjects that seem to me to be especially essential to Christian growth.

I desire to claim for my treatise a certain unity. This unity does not inhere so much in the relation of these subjects to each other as in their relation to Christian development. My treatment is not speculative. Upon each subject I have made a prolonged study of the New Testament, and in each chapter I have tried to group the various texts bearing upon the subject. Of these texts many have been printed in the body of the book, in the desire that the voice of God might be heard. This method has some disadvantages; but these will be more than outweighed, it is hoped, by the ad-

vantages of the method to those who desire to learn what the New Testament teaches on these subjects.

If by means of this book some of God's children may receive one more impulse toward a fuller Christian life, and so be brought nearer to him, my prayer will be answered.

I desire here gratefully to acknowledge the valuable assistance of several honored men. I wish especially to express my gratitude to Dr. Hovey who has encouraged and assisted me from the beginning, and who has written the Introduction; and also to my honored instructor, Dr. Strong, who has made many valuable suggestions.

E. F. O.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.	
By Alvah Hovey, D. D., LL. D., President of Newton Theological Institution	XVII
PRELIMINARY.	
Christian Growth. - - -	23
CHAPTER I.	
Regeneration. - - - -	48
CHAPTER II.	
The Law and the Gospel. - -	71
CHAPTER III.	
The Churches. - - - -	101
CHAPTER IV.	
Loyalty to Truth. - - -	128
CHAPTER V.	
Faith. - - - - -	142
CHAPTER VI.	
Missions and Christianity. -	162
CHAPTER VII.	
Method in Christian Beneficence.	184
CHAPTER VIII.	
The Holy Spirit. - - -	207
CHAPTER IX.	
Prayer. - - - - -	218
CHAPTER X.	
Perseverance. - - : -	247
CHAPTER XI.	
Sanctification. - - - -	274

INTRODUCTION.

TRUE piety is often spoken of by the sacred writers as a life ; but growth, progress, or enlargement, at least for a time, is characteristic of all living beings except the highest. It is also characteristic of the various parts and qualities of a finite being, so that we speak of a growing body, muscle or brain ; of a growing mind, intellect or understanding ; of a growing appetite, desire or taste ; of a growing manliness, gentleness or susceptibility ; of a growing pride, ambition or avarice. In like manner, we speak of a growing faith and love and hope ; of a growing knowledge and devotion and spirituality. Thus there is progress in the religious life of man ; and this progress is supposed to be summed up in the expression, "Grow in grace."

In the expression, as thus employed, the word "grace" is commonly understood to signify Christian life as the effect of divine grace. But there is reason to believe that this inter-

pretation of the word, though suggested by the common version, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," is less correct than the one suggested by the revised version, "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3 : 18) And if so, the exhortation of Peter is to this effect, that they should grow as Christians in the sphere and influence of the grace and knowledge which come from Jesus Christ. In other words, Christ is conceived of as the source of the divine influence and knowledge on which their progress toward maturity of Christian character and power depends. Hence to grow in grace is to grow under the influence of grace, which is imparted to every Christian.

The privilege and duty of Christian growth are not affected by this explanation of Peter's language, though the conditions instead of the results of this growth are supposed to be specified. These conditions are chiefly two, the influence of the Holy Spirit and the influence of Christian truth. Without these the germ of spiritual life will not expand; the infantile strength of holy desire and purpose will not increase to maturity. John refers to both of

them in the prologue to his Gospel by saying that "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ," and Peter refers to one of them in his first Epistle where he exhorts his readers, 'as new-born babes, to long for the unadulterated, spiritual milk, that in the use of it they may grow unto salvation.'

Paul also speaks of his own ministry and that of Apollos as connected with, but subordinate to the work of the Spirit: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God made it grow;" and he represents the whole ministry of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers as having for its end 'the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministration,' 'that we may be no longer babes,' but 'speaking the truth may in love grow up in all things into him who is the head, even Christ.' Complete union with Christ and likeness to him are the ends contemplated in spiritual growth.

But the two conditions of Christian growth mentioned by Peter (2 Pet. 3: 18) are objective. They are offered freely to every Christian as the atmosphere or element in which he is invited to live and move and rejoice. Yet there can be no increase of life without action on his part, without a purpose and effort to inhale

this divine grace and knowledge, without a deliberate opening of his mind to the truth as it is in Jesus, a thorough subjection of his will to the will of Christ, and a grateful sense of the Savior's love, rendering service to him a delight. This voluntary action on the part of Christians is indispensable to spiritual growth in any direction. They must respond to God's fatherly care and discipline. They must train their minds to thoughtfulness, reverence and trust. They must employ reason, memory and imagination in learning and doing the Master's will. They must cherish faith, hope and love as holy incentives to loyal service. They must unite devout study of the Sacred Oracles with persistent effort to save men.

In this way the Savior calls his people to an ever improving life. Indifference, lassitude, slumber, are opposed to the nature of this life. Yet there are many who appear to be at ease, fully content with the measure of religious knowledge and devotion which they possess. For a brief period they seemed to run well, but their progress was soon arrested. Having lost sight of the prize of their heavenly calling they are now satisfied to loiter by the way or to advance at a snail's pace. Their eyes are

closed to the loss and the sin of such a course. "Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" they are willing to forego for the present, faintly hoping that by some divine ministry, independent of their own action, they will by and by be transformed and translated. Meanwhile they float along with conscience half asleep, with hope faint, and with love feeble. What a contrast between such a spiritual state and one that is thoroughly alive and vigorous! One that is full of purpose, aspiration, and zeal for God! It is the contrast between a motionless pool and a mighty river. Is it not amazing that any man, who has tasted, even for a day, the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, should be content with a listless mind and dull affections? Of all the mysteries of human conduct none is stranger than the attitude of Christians towards the infinite privilege of becoming daily more like their Lord.

The subject treated by Mr. Osborn in the following pages is therefore one of special interest and importance. The origin, the nature, the increase, and the preservation, of the life in Christ, and especially the law, the means and the conditions of its growth, are matters which should engage the attention of every

child of God, and the work of Mr. Osborn can not fail to assist those who wish to consider these matters in the light of divine truth. For his discussion is scriptural, comprehensive and earnest. Going back to the sources of knowledge concerning the new life, the author has presented the results of his search for the mind of Christ with clearness and candor. To those who have just entered the way of life the book will be doubly useful, and the purpose of this Introduction is to commend it heartily to their examination. It will repay study. It should quicken the pulses of Christian life in every one who reads it.

ALVAH HOVEY.

Newton Centre,
Feb. 19, 1894.

SOME ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

PRELIMINARY.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

THERE must be some reason for the world's disappointment in Christians. This disappointment is felt both by those who are Christians and by those who are not. Every Christian professes to have experienced a spiritual change that assures him of escape from the punishment of the wicked and of reward in Heaven. If this change guarantees the eternal happiness of souls that are otherwise doomed to eternal misery, the change itself must be radical; and the world has a right to expect signs of it in the life. Why is not the expectation of the world met? Is Christianity really the failure

that the world's complaint against Christians would indicate ?

There is a misapprehension on the part of many concerning the way in which Christianity does its work. As to the work itself there is no serious misunderstanding. The task that Christianity sets itself is the transformation of the soul from a state of sin into a state of holiness. The misapprehension lies in supposing that conversion is the completed work of Christianity. But in fact, conversion is only the beginning of the work of Christianity. Conversion is a change of purpose and of love, but not a complete transformation of character. The transformation of character is a long, slow process. It is right to expect a change in the life ; and there really is a change in the life. It may not be conspicuous at first, but as the new purpose of the soul comes into more masterful possession of the individual, the world will be constrained to recognize the change that is taking place. This misapprehension concerning the way in which Christianity does its work is seen in the tacit expectation that conversion will be accompanied by intense excitement, and by a great display of sudden breaking down and of sudden and complete

building up into a perfect life. The sudden breaking down may come or it may not come. But the building up into a perfect life is never accomplished at once ; therefore the world is disappointed. This disappointment really grows out of the fact that more emphasis has been put upon conversion, in proportion to its relative importance, than has been put upon Christian growth. The present purpose is to emphasize, first, the fact of Christian growth, and then the manner and means by which it is accomplished.

The Christian grows.

This appears from the nature both of Christianity and of the Christian. The fundamental principle of Christianity is this : Love must so completely possess the soul as to control its action. Christianity is supreme love to God, and love to one's neighbor as to one's self, possessing the soul to such a degree that the life demonstrates the love. This principle ought never to be confounded with a mere arousal of the religious nature, between which and conversion there is a vital difference. Men, by nature, are religious ; but they are not, by nature, Christians. Christianity appeals to the religious nature and there secures its hold ; but if it has not done more than merely to awaken

and to interest the religious nature—if it has not possessed this nature for itself—then it has not been allowed to perform its real mission. Moreover, Christianity is not something that can be bought with money, or with good deeds, or with penance; neither can it be secured by exchange. It cannot be received all at once, as an article of exchange or purchase may be received. Neither is Christianity a system of theology. A systematic arrangement of Christian doctrine is very desirable. It is even essential to the most perfect appreciation of Christianity; but Christianity requires the practice of Christian doctrine.

A Christian, then, is not a person all of whose passions have been purified and all of whose habits have been reformed. He is not one whose wisdom has been so greatly increased or whose judgment has become so perfect that he cannot fall into error. But a Christian is a person who sees the necessity for exactly such help as Jesus Christ can give to overcome all that is sinful in his nature, and who earnestly accepts Jesus as his Savior from past sin and from future faults, and as his ideal of life. The Christian, therefore, is not perfect; but

he is perfecting. In regenerating the soul, God does not transform man's character for him. From the very nature of character, it is impossible for God to transform a man's character without the co-operation of the man. But to those who will accept it, God gives a disposition to work out the transformation of their characters for themselves, and he makes it possible for them so to do. Human character cannot be perfected without human effort to that end; and it cannot be perfected without the help of God. This help is offered through Jesus Christ. Therefore, a Christian is a person who has formed an unchangeable purpose to follow Jesus Christ as exactly as possible. The result of this united work of God and man will be increasing likeness to Christ in the external life, proportioned to the progress of the internal transformation.

That the Christian grows is also proved from the facts of Christian experience. A comparison of one's present spiritual life with that of the day of his conversion may not be satisfactory; and at first thought, it may seem not to show any growth. Many Christians are in full sympathy with the familiar words:

“ Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

“ What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But now I find an aching void
The world can never fill.”

These verses incidentally reveal the sad fact that Christians sometimes become worldly; but the prominent thought in them is regret because of this worldliness. Taking into consideration this Christian's past worldliness and his present regret, has there been any growth in his Christian life during this period of worldliness? Perhaps the experience of this very period has been a means of growth. Not the best means. The violent storm that beats the setting fruit from the tree and that breaks some of the branches, does not promote the growth of so much fruit as does the gentle, continuous rain. But the tree must have rain, even if with hail, or it cannot produce any fruit at all. This Christian would have grown better by a steadier experience; but as he did not

hold to that, his return to the world has proved to him that "the world can never fill" the "aching void." He comes back to his Christian duties with the certainty that it is best to be a Christian reasserted by this period of worldliness. He has thus come a second time to the same conclusion, and his experience verifies itself. This is Christian growth; but how little of it compared with what should have been! What loss of time, valuable to the Christian himself and to the cause of God!

There are also in Christian experience periods of apathy. But intense feeling is not essential to Christian growth. "The blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord" is not the most exalted blessedness. The miracle may have been performed in a dark day, but no glare of the noonday sun thereafter ever seemed so bright as that first flash of light to the blind eyes that Jesus opened. These blind men who received their sight could not experience that same vision of light again, however, without first becoming blind again. So Paul's marvelous experience in his conversion was possible to Paul only once. This first vision of God can be experienced but once by any one. The part of the experience that is peculiar

to its newness, a very thrilling part to many, when once past is past forever. The experience in conversion, especially if the conversion is preceded by resistance, is often tinged with ecstasy. Those who have not learned that Christian development is not measured by feeling are often looking back to this wonderful time of conversion as the time of their largest Christian life. But it is not. Although the Christian's progress is often painfully slow yet he is never again so small and so weak as he was on the day of his conversion. If certain cases come to mind in which this seems not to be true, ask whether regeneration has really taken place. It is more probable that many professing Christians have not experienced regeneration than that the truly regenerate do not make progress in Christian life. In the midst of the ecstasy of conversions that take place in times of religious excitement the young Christian naturally attaches great importance to his feeling. But if regeneration is really effected, he will soon find the germ of his new life to consist in an unobtrusive, and at first perhaps an unrecognized, but in an abiding, purpose. This purpose, sometimes cold and dogged, is often the only

thing that remains when the tumult of the feelings has given place to quiet or even to apathy. If this purpose does not remain when the glory has passed by, the soul is upon the mountain peak alone. Jesus, as well as Moses and Elias, has gone. On the other hand, those who have not had this decided experience in conversion are frequently troubled because they have not had it. These also are measuring their Christian stature by feeling. Feeling has its proper place, but it may be left to take care of itself. It does not matter much how one feels, if his purpose is right. If the purpose is right and remains steady the feeling will be right in due time.

Let us, then, try our experience concerning Christian growth by more appropriate tests. Comparing the knowledge of God that we had at the time of conversion with the knowledge of God that we have today, has not there been some growth in this respect? At first God was not very real to us; but we have often met him in prayer since then. We are more at home with his Spirit than we were at first. Many people have found it difficult to attain to a purely spiritual conception of God. Possibly, in those first days, imagination presented

a form, perhaps the form of a great man, which helped the mind to attain the true conception. But that form is unworthy of our present conception of God. We now better understand that it is possible for God to be spirit and yet to have personality. Indeed, some can understand the personality of God better because he is spirit. What an advance is this in the knowledge of God! Simultaneously with this growth in the knowledge of God, faith has grown. At first, faith enabled us to ask for the gratification of our desires; now, stronger faith enables us to ask God to control our desires. This growth in faith has promoted growth in prayer. If we do not pray more than formerly, we pray more acceptably and to greater purpose. We have also found a deeper and a more abiding peace. And is there not, in our lives, something more of the grace of Jesus? When we examine ourselves in this way we are ashamed and we are rebuked. But this rebuke of conscience, however much we may feel that it is deserved, should not prevent us from seeing the little advance that has been made. There has been growth; not so much as there ought to have been; so little that we are ashamed to call attention to it. But, alone

with God, with a little flush of joy relieving the sense of shame, each heart may acknowledge, "I am growing," "The Christian grows."

That the Christian grows is further evident from the New Testament. There are numerous texts that teach Christian growth directly. Paul illustrates his experience in this regard by means of an oriental race. "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3, 12-14. In these races there was the race-course, the goal at the end, and a prize that was awarded to the winner when he reached the goal. Paul made the race-course illustrate the struggle of his life after that perfect righteousness that is by faith in Christ. This perfect righteousness he illustrates by the goal; and he makes the prize represent the resurrection from the dead.

NOTE. All quotations from the Bible are made from the Revised Version.

He says that he has not yet obtained the prize, the resurrection from the dead; that he has not even reached the goal, perfect righteousness; but that he is pressing on. In the succeeding verses he exhorts his brethren also to press on, for the goal will not be reached until death. Other texts are just as explicit. "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1.Pet. 2, 1-5. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 20-21. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he

is." 1 John 3, 2. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away : and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit." John 15, 2. "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 11 Pet. 3, 18.

Besides these, all exhortations to Christians to live carefully and to become better, prove that the Christian grows. These show that Christians are not perfect; and also that they are expected to make progress toward perfection. Notice, first, a few texts that show the imperfection of Christians. Peter refused to believe that Christ should suffer, and Jesus rebuked him for his unbelief. "But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art a stumbling-block unto me : for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Mat. 16, 23. Peter was evidently lacking in spiritual discernment; and as his denial clearly shows he was lacking also in power to resist temptation. "And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, Of a truth thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the cock crew.

And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly." Mat. 26, 73-75. Yet Peter had been chosen by Jesus for an important work; and subsequent history proves that he did that work nobly. Peter's Christian growth is very noticeable. Paul's testimony has already been given in the quotation just made from Philipians. His consciousness of personal imperfection is further revealed by his words in Romans 7, 22-23. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members." Paul proceeds in the following chapter to show how the Christian is to escape from the condition that is described in this chapter; but he plainly declares that he himself has not yet escaped. He is waiting for the redemption of the body. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Rom. 8, 22-23. James confesses his imperfection and that of all Christians. "For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also." James 3, 2. John makes a like confession. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." 1 John 1, 8-10.

Consider next, three exhortations, out of many that might be cited, showing that Christians are expected to grow. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mat. 26, 41. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able; for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk after the manner of men?" 1 Cor. 3, 1-3. "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,

lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith." Heb. 12, 1-2. Besides such texts, the whole scripture doctrine of sanctification proves that the Christian grows. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor." 1 Thes. 4, 3-4. Sanctification, therefore, is not a condition of perfect holiness; but it is a process of self-mastery. This is further evident from the fact that the Thessalonian Christians were not yet wholly sanctified. "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly." 1 Thes. 5, 23. Sanctification, or the process of becoming holy, was not yet complete with these Christians. Paul also exhorted the Corinthian Christians to make perfect their holiness. "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 11 Cor. 7, 1. The New Testament clearly teaches that a Christian is not a perfect, but a perfecting being. He is born of God: he must grow up into Godliness.

Beyond the mere fact of Christian growth, we may also learn something concerning the manner and means by which this growth is accomplished.

Concerning the manner of Christian growth, notice first, that it is gradual. It requires time. In the nature of things growth can proceed at only a certain rate. Every particle that tends to build up the growing body must have time to be wrought into the organism of that body. The Christian must have time to make use of all helps ; and by practical experience to weave the teachings of the Bible into his character. This is the reason why time—the passing moments of life—is given. The primary object of these years of life is not to afford opportunity for buying, or for selling, or for getting gain, or even for securing intellectual development ; but the primary object of these years of life is to furnish opportunity for the development of character. Let every day afford time for establishing in the soul some principle of godliness, and every evening will witness the Christian's growth.

Gradual growth further implies development by minute increments. Size, in growing bodies, is attained by manifold divisions of pro-

toplasmic cells. One cell becomes two; the two become four; and so forth indefinitely. There is a true evolution, an unfolding of a larger life from a germinal beginning. But the additions by which the size is increased are so exceedingly small that thousands of such additions are made before the eye discerns any increase in the size of the growing body. This is characteristic of all growth. We should expect it to be true of Christian growth; and so it proves to be. The Christian grows very slowly through all his life. His growth is gradual. Paul brings this invisible process into view by means of an illustration. "Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." Eph. 2, 20-21. As brick is added to brick, and as timber is added to timber, and as nail after nail is driven, each several part contributing to the perfection of the building until the structure is complete, so in the formation of Christian character, grace is added to grace until the perfect day.

Christian growth is also spontaneous. The term is sufficiently exact, for when we say a tree grows spontaneously, we mean naturally,

that is, without human compulsion. The Christian grows as the tree grows, as the lilies grow, as a boy grows; not by forcing himself to grow, but because God is at work in him. A Christian cannot grow by trying to grow; but he will grow if he does not resist God.

This brings us to the means of Christian growth. And to God as the primary and essential means. Every thing that grows is made to grow by the power of God. A tree grows because of the forces of life that are a part of it, and without which, as such a part, the tree would not be a tree. But these forces of life in the tree operate under the hand of God. The tree has nothing to do with its growth. The forces in it are working independently of it. They are at work upon it building a tree because God so orders. As we come to higher forms of life the analogy is still seen though other forces are found working. In animals there is mind as well as matter. Matter is always passive; mind is active. Animals may resist the work of the forces that promote their growth, and so they may arrest growth and be dwarfed. Or they may drive these forces entirely away and so may commit suicide. On the other hand, they may assist

the forces of life by putting themselves more fully into the hands of these silent builders. Instead of refusing to eat they may seek food. The tree unconsciously reaches out, by its innumerable roots and branches, and brings all food to itself. The animal has a set of forces working in him which moves him from place to place to find the material needed for his growth. This set of forces we call instinct. But this also is from God. In man we find forces of life in the presence of which we are reverent. We are conscious of the operation of these forces within us, and we are conscious that they are not working under our direction. "Which of you by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature?" We can only learn the conditions under which these forces work best, and then seek to promote those conditions. God has made laws for the body; men must conform to them or the body is dwarfed or dies. So men must conform to the laws of mind or they never reach their greatest mental power. So also men must find out and obey the laws of spiritual development or there will be but little growth in the Christian life. This spirit of conformity allows God to work his will in the soul. The work is his; men permit it.

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." Heb. 13, 20-21.

But this permission is not mere passivity. It is the complement of God's work. It is Christian activity. This is the secondary means of Christian growth. This activity must be exercised along the line of the revelation of God's will. There must, therefore, be careful study of God's word. Jesus says that he is blessed who hears and keeps God's word. "But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Luke 11, 28. The Christian must hold fast to Jesus, the Head of the church and the source of life. "Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the in-

crease of God." Col. 2, 18-19. The Christian should have faith that Jesus will assist him in overcoming his evil nature. "And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me." II Cor. 12, 9. The Christian should make suitable use of the services and ordinances of the church. "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4, 11-13. He who gives himself to these things will be absorbed in love for God and for men; and therefore, he will be so absorbed in the spiritual work of the church that he will have neither time nor need to worry about himself or to fear that he is not growing.

This consideration of the doctrine of Christian growth leads us to some conclusions of a

very practical nature. In the first place, no Christian is perfect in this life. Paul was not. Peter was not. John was not. Certainly, then, no one less favored has been perfect. The Christian longs for perfection. Let him not confound this great desire with the perfect state. Let him not confound his consciousness of present salvation through the merit of Jesus, with personal perfection. His justification is complete, even in the midst of his moral failures, because of his faith in Jesus. His sanctification is going on as he grows in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. Paul ran his course without slacking his pace till he reached the goal at the end of life. Run on. Do not lull your spirit into repose by the self-deception of which John speaks. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." I John I, 8-10.

But, in the second place, this doctrine teaches us that it is unjust and unkind to expect of Christians more than God requires of them. How many young servants of Jesus have been

early discouraged by the ready rebuke of their older brethren in the church. Do not strike, because it creeps upon the floor, the little child that has not yet learned to walk! Let our young Christians feel the warmth of our love and the encouragement of our commendation. Do not even older Christians become discouraged? Yet no one should discourage another nor be himself discouraged. The Christian grows. Every Christian grows. Compare the past and the present. Be encouraged, if only a little. There is a little growth. There will be more, and if you will it may be more rapid.

So we conclude, in the last place, that if by neglect of the church, which is the body of Christ who is its head; and if by the neglect of the Word of God, the Christian's growth is slow and unsteady and not symmetrical, he is to blame, for he resists God's work by refusing to do his part. And if his growth is stunted by walking in the way of sinners and by sitting in the seat of the scornful, even if he attend also to the appointed means of growth, he is to blame for his disgraceful deformity. He resists God.

Let us learn the secret of a quiet, steady, joyful Christian life. The secret is love. God's

mighty love has absorbed the Christian, and has filled him with its own magnetic power. Self is forgotten in the transport of the Savior's presence, and in the inspiration of reconciling the disobedient world to him. Absorbed in love and in its ministries, the Christian, breathing deep his native air, is transforming into the image of the Son of God.

CHAPTER I.

REGENERATION.

Regeneration is a figurative term. Generation comes at the beginning of life ; and exactly speaking, it can come but once for any creature. A re-generation must be a change in a being that already has an existence. But this does not make the Christian life less a reality nor does it make its beginning less definite. Regeneration stands as really at the beginning of the Christian life as does generation stand at the beginning of physical life. In this case, however, the new life is not another creature, but a renewed creature. In regeneration the wicked man's soul does not go out of his body that a new soul may come in ; but the wicked soul receives a new and a nobler impulse from the Holy Spirit. In becoming a Christian one does not lose his old personality or his identity. He still retains his distinguishing modes of thought and of action, and finds that these still tend to assert themselves. Where they are evil they must

be overcome. Regeneration, considered in respect to God's part of the work, consists in giving the soul a desire for godliness, and in strengthening the will. Considered in respect to man's part of the work, it is conversion, a change of purpose. Therefore there is nothing added to the soul. It is changed at the center of personality. The transformation of the whole soul and of the life follows gradually.

Regeneration is a change in the soul by means of which man is brought into continued sympathy with God. It is accomplished by God who secures the co-operation of man. And it must be experienced by every one who escapes the pain of God's continued displeasure.

Regeneration is a change in the soul.

The fact that regeneration is a spiritual change leads us to expect spiritual results when the change takes place. Physical effects will often follow as the result of the action of the soul under its new purpose, and by a distinct assertion of the supremacy of the renewed soul over the body. That God could, at the time when the soul is renewed in its purpose, also change certain physical appetites and passions may not be doubted; but that he does this, if he ever does it, is the exception and not the

rule. God deals with most men as he dealt with Paul; giving grace to overcome, not removing the "thorn in the flesh."

The change is spiritual. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The drunkard's spirit is changed, and the abused body must be guarded until, by physiological law, the old appetite is brought under control. This does not make the change less real but more certain. The soul is the reality of human existence. It will have the supremacy. The real forces are spiritual. God rectifies these. It is with these that regeneration deals. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3, 5-6. "But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God." I Cor. 2, 10-12.

This change is mysterious. Perhaps no more so however than changes in other forms of life. Life itself is a mystery. Even physical life, up to the present time, has eluded the keenest scientific investigation. This may not always be so.

Christ does not anywhere teach that men should not seek to understand the laws by which the soul is born again. These laws, like those that govern the winds, are mysterious. But the action of the wind is not so mysterious now as it was in the time when Jesus referred Nicodemus to it as an illustration of the mysterious nature of regeneration. The winds are well under the eye of the civilized world today. Likewise the mystery of regeneration may yet be better understood. The winds are not less wonderful because their circuits are better known. And so regeneration, even though its mysteries were all known, is the all-important fact of human life. The truth, though often simpler, is always safer than the mystery with which our ignorance surrounds it. Mystery may make men stare, but truth commands them. We need not hesitate to search out the truths that lie hidden in the mystery of regeneration. And when we have found out some of them we shall probably

be less superstitious but more reverent and more earnest.

At present we know more of the results of regeneration than we do of the process. The results show that the change is fundamental. So fundamental, indeed, as to make the regenerate person a new creature. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." II Cor. 5, 17. "But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be . . . that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." Eph. 4, 20-24.

The regenerate person is spoken of as alive from the dead. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." John 5, 24. "But present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead." Rom. 6, 13. Of course this language is figurative. The word dead refers primarily to a condition of body. Then it is transferred to the soul, and in its use here it is expected to correspond, in certain but not in all partic-

ulars, to the literal use. The dead body is wholly insensible. The dead soul is still possessed of its power to think and to feel. There is, however, a partial resemblance. The dead soul is insensible to God, its true life. By regeneration the sensibilities of the soul are aroused to know God; and the soul comes into vital relations to him. The soul was dead and is brought to life. The change is fundamental.

The unregenerate soul is bondservant to Satan. By means of regeneration it is set free and becomes the voluntary servant of God. "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered." Rom. 6, 17. "As free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God." 1 Pet. 2, 16. The service of Satan is hard; and it so degrades the soul as to render it unfit for Heaven. Would it not be more miserable in Heaven than in Hell? The service of God brings every power and sensibility to its highest perfection, and strengthens the will by the voluntary nature of the service. There could not be a change more fundamental than this.

This change is not always manifest at first,

but the servant becomes like his master. The servant of God will soon show that he is, in a degree, a partaker of the divine nature. "But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." II Cor. 3, 18. "For they verily for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness." Heb. 12, 10. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." I John 3, 2. The soul becomes righteous as it is influenced by these divine manifestations. It will be perfect in the end. The change that is the point of departure from the service of sin to such a life as this must be fundamental.

By means of this change the soul is brought into continued sympathy with God.

The regenerate soul, according to its capacity and knowledge, endures whatever God endures. There is fellowship of suffering and of joy. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." So the regenerate

soul loves the world. There is fellowship of love for the dead in sin. Love is the atmosphere in which God and his Son and Christians live. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14, 23. This condition is very different from that of the soul before it cared for God, or for Jesus, or for the souls of men.

Moreover, the sympathy that has taken the place of that awful estrangement is of the closest type. Christians are called sons and heirs of God. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1, 12. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified with him." Rom. 8, 14-17. "Behold what manner of love the

Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God : and such we are." 1 John 3, 1.

The regenerate are also called the firstfruits for God. "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." James 1, 18. "These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the lamb." Rev. 14, 4. The redeemed are God's delight. He is their loving Father, caring for them constantly, and making of those who love him one great family. The condition of brotherhood in this family is primarily a condition of sympathy with God. It assures salvation, everlasting life and Heaven. It is all these ; and the soul needs only to live on in this state forever to have all the promises of Jesus fulfilled in itself.

The soul that has come into this sympathy with God will continue in it forever. This is everlasting life. The soul is born of incorruptible seed, to an incorruptible inheritance, and to eternal life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3, 16. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Pet. 1, 3-5. See also v. 23. He who has really come into this condition of rest and joy will never leave it permanently. His sympathy with God will hold him, and he is kept by the power of God. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, which hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." John 10, 27-29. See also 17, 11-12. Jude 1.

To this doctrine there is the possible exception of the unpardonable sin. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries." Heb. 10, 26-27:

It is not easy, however, to separate bosom friends. David and Jonathan were knit together. Ruth and Naomi would not be parted. There is such a thing as spiritual affinity. Death may separate kindred spirits, but they will find each other. God not only can be found, but also he cannot be escaped. He is over all, everywhere, always. By him all things have their being. To escape him is impossible. To be out of sympathy with him is death. To be in sympathy with him is to be alive and happy, always, everywhere. So much does regeneration accomplish for men.

Regeneration is itself accomplished by God who secures the co-operation of man.

God the Father begins the work; or, if regeneration is instantaneous, then he begins the preparation of the soul for it. "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him." John 6, 44. This work could not begin with man any more than there can be spontaneous generation. There cannot be a living being without a progenitor. That which is born must have been born of that which had existence before it. Whatever the influence is that turns the soul toward him, that God has sent. It is God taking the initiative.

This is purely and wholly a work of mercy and of grace. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy." Rom. 9, 16. God was not under any obligation to redeem men. If they were not responsible for their sin, there might be some moral compulsion in response to which he must provide a way of salvation. But men are wilful sinners. "For as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification." Rom. 6, 19. Therefore, the regenerate soul is "Born . . . not of the will of man, but of God." John 1, 13.

While this work originates with God, the Father, it is made possible by the work of the Son, Jesus, who revealed the nature and the will of the Father. God had revealed himself to men before, as they had been able to comprehend him. Finally, after years of preparation, he gave a fuller revelation of himself. Heretofore his spiritual nature had been too subtle for the comprehension of the race; but when Jesus came with his fuller revelation he found a people that had long been preparing to understand it. God chose to reveal himself

more fully to men by means of Jesus Christ.

And in no other way is this revelation made with sufficient certainty. Nature supplements the Bible; but nature alone is not sufficient. Or, looking from another point of view, the Bible is as much a phenomenon of nature as is the ocean. What is it here for? Jesus Christ is a phenomenon to be explained. Whence is he? What is his place among all else that is? If the ocean reveals God, why may not Jesus also reveal God? From the unresponsive ocean we must reason back to God. Why may not the intelligent Jesus reveal God to intelligent men better than can the insentient ocean? If the ocean knew and could speak, surely its responses would be helpful. Moreover, it is not probable that the highest revelation of God would come through the lowest form of creation. It is reasonable to suppose that men will find out more about God by means of Jesus Christ than they can find out concerning him by a study of the material universe.

Jesus came to show that the lessons of nature and of earlier centuries were primary and rudimentary, and to usher in the next lesson series of the great educational system through which God is reclaiming man. Jesus, therefore, as

the fullest revelation of God, is called the Word and the Truth. His word is called the word of truth. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1, 14. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." 14, 6. "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth." James 1, 18. This is the agency through which God communicates with men. Jesus was a living teacher of the nature and of the will of God. And, furthermore, by his incarnation, life, suffering and death, he took the sinner's place before God and made full satisfaction for sin upon condition of repentance and faith on the sinner's part. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Mat. 20, 28. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." Gal. 3, 13. See also Rom. 3, 22-26. 5, 8. Col. 1, 19 seq. Heb. 9.

Since the earthly mission of Jesus has been finished, the Holy Spirit has been here to enlighten the minds of men as they study the records of the life and teaching of Jesus. We are dependent for our knowledge of God's will,

not upon the Bible alone, nor upon the Holy Spirit alone, but upon the Bible studied with the illumination of the Holy Spirit upon the soul. It is profitable to study the Bible with the critical spirit, but the divine truth that it contains will not necessarily be understood by such a study. The Holy Spirit reveals the truth of the New Testament to the student. This may not be anything unusual. Students have long known that he who seeks to understand what his author has written must enter into his author's spirit. This may be the same principle, only with the difference that the author here is God; and that his spirit is more potent and is more active than can be the case with any human author. He is with and in every Christian reader, and will interpret. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you." John 14, 16-17. "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." John 14, 26. See also 15, 26. Acts 2, 33.

These texts have reference primarily to the apostles yet the method of the Spirit as here revealed is probably the same as that pursued with all men. He brings the soul and the truth into such relations to each other that the soul is born again and perpetually sustained by the truth. The difference between the work that he did for the apostles and that which he does for other men is, perhaps, only such a difference as lies in the different circumstances of the truth at different times. The Spirit reminded the apostles of what they had seen and heard. He assists other men in the interpretation of what the apostles, thus inspired, wrote. And in this way he is, for all those who will be enlightened by him, a renewing power. "But when the kindness of God our Savior, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3, 4-5. Where, without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, certain only half intelligible incidents appeared, by his influence great and inspiring truths begin to be revealed. These truths are made to appeal to the student. They become

to him so sure, so beautiful, so strong, that he gives his heart and yields his will. Thus the work is God's. The Father begins it. The Son made it possible by the revelation of the truth. And the Holy Spirit renews the soul by means of the revealed truth.

But man must co-operate with God. The result of regeneration is sympathy. This means reciprocity. God loves; but unless man loves in return, there is no sympathy. God calls, man must respond if there is to be sympathy between God and man. Every one who is born again must receive Jesus by faith. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1, 12. "He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3, 18.

Accompanying the exercise of faith in Jesus there will be repentance. When one comes to yield he will realize that all his excuses for not accepting Jesus have been born of his sinful nature. He will therefore repent. "Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you." Acts 2, 37-38.

The actual acceptance of Jesus by repentance and faith should be made manifest at once by baptism. This ordinance is very closely, if not inseparably, associated with regeneration. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Mark 16, 16. "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Acts 10, 47-48. See also 16, 30-33. John 3, 5. 1 Pet. 3, 20-21; and others.

Regeneration, then, is brought about, first by God's call to man; and then by man's response in repentance and faith; and baptism should follow at once. When this condition is reached it is found to be something more than philosophy and something more than science. Both philosophy and science may be involved in it; but it is religion which is as unique and quite as trustworthy in its place as philosophy and science are in their places. Religion dares what philosophy does not dare. It sometimes insists upon that at which science laughs. But as science becomes maturer it does not laugh so unadvisedly; and as religion becomes more

scientific in its method it appears to men who think, even though they do not know its secret power, less provocative of laughter. When this secret power is known, when men have experienced regeneration, then they cut away the scaffolding from the new house and are content to dwell in the house. It may be the duty of some men, as it is the privilege of all, to explain the philosophy of Christianity; but the Christian does not need to do this for his own sake. His confidence is founded upon primary evidence, and he has now to deal with life. The world teeming with life is the Christian's field of action.

Finally, regeneration must be experienced by every soul that escapes the pain of God's continued displeasure.

The casual reader of the New Testament knows this to be taught there. John 3, 3, and many similar passages, are explicit. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Knowing what we do about God and about men, we can easily see from the nature of the case that regeneration must be experienced by every soul that escapes the pain of God's continued displeasure. God must be con-

tinually displeased with all who are not in sympathy with himself, because he is always true and right. There is no other being who has all knowledge. There is no other who can say, I am sure of the truth, beyond doubt. He who is not in sympathy with God, is not in sympathy with truth. He may be in sympathy with much that is true, and may have a love for certain phases of truth, but in the last analysis he is found to love his own will and his particular sin. He is true to the facts of philosophy, science and history, in so far as he can be true to them while not a Christian ; but he is not true to the religious nature that God gave him. He is not true in seeking to be wholly conformed to the will of God. He is therefore fundamentally untrue. With all his boast of truthfulness in scientific research he is liable to deceive himself at any point. The regenerate man, therefore, may be expected to have a keener eye than the unregenerate man for truth of every kind when he brings to the search for truth the same degree of intellectual power that the unregenerate man brings. And this is so because of the regenerate man's full surrender to the God of truth. Such a man is in full sympathy with

truth even if it points the finger of condemnation at him. He has learned to repent; and his love for God has taken the place of his pride. In this man God is pleased.

It must now be asked whether or not unregenerate men are in sympathy with God. In the light of what Jesus taught the answer is evident. They are not. Shall we then throw out the evidence of Jesus? By what law of science can such evidence be discarded? It must not be discarded. The New Testament is the most important of all contributions to our knowledge of God. He who is out of sympathy with God as he is revealed in the New Testament is out of sympathy with him just where God most desires sympathy, and where alone true sympathy can exist, that is, in the personal experience of repentance, faith and love. Accepting, then, the God of the New Testament as worthy of intelligent faith, we can see at a glance that when the soul is first called to consider the claim of God it finds itself out of sympathy with him. Even in the case of carefully reared and sweet tempered children who have always been accustomed to prayer, and who have always tried to do right for Jesus' sake, there comes a period of gradual awaking

to the fact that except for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit they would not be in sympathy with God.

These two facts, God's perfect character and man's natural lack of sympathy with him because of sin, make it certain that God is displeased with all men whose natural bias to sin has not been rectified; and his displeasure will continue until this bias is changed. It can be changed in only one way. The truth concerning God's nature and will must get before the unregenerate man so clearly that he will realize his guilt before God. This truth must come to him from some good source outside of himself, from some source better than himself, or he will not believe it. He must be sure that it comes ultimately from God. Nothing less than certainty that God's will concerning him is revealed from God will satisfy. Then, either the man must change his attitude toward God, or God must change his attitude toward the man. But God is truth. He can not change and still be true. The man must change. There is no other way. But the man will not change unless he repents of his sin. And God can never be pleased with a man who is not repentant for sin. The man must re-

pent. There is no other way. So likewise, he must have faith and love. Without these he will not repent, and without these God cannot be pleased with him. There is no other way. But this is only the manward side of regeneration. The man may call it what he pleases. He may, possibly, be unconscious of the process through which he passed, knowing only the result; but if he has come into this sympathy, he has been born again in this way.

If God's displeasure rests continually upon every man who is not in sympathy with him, and if this sympathy can be secured only through regeneration, it follows that regeneration must be experienced by every one who escapes the pain of God's continued displeasure.

The attempt has now been made to show that regeneration is a change in the soul by means of which man is brought into continued sympathy with God. That it is accomplished by God who secures the co-operation of man. And that it must be experienced by every one who escapes the pain of God's continued displeasure. It remains only to remark that there can be no deeper hell than that of God's displeasure: there can be no higher heaven than that of sympathy with him.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELATION OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

The ten commandments are among the first lessons that we ever learned. Our childish minds were impressed with the stern justice of the mighty God who wrote his laws with his finger upon tables of stone, and who then gave these tables of stone to Moses on the top of a mountain that smoked as if smitten by the lightning that flashed about its summit, while the thunder shook it to the very base where the trembling people stood in fear lest, coming too near, they should touch it and fall dead. No doubt such lessons, as first lessons, tend to develop a certain type of orthodoxy, unless indeed they cause an awful reaction into skepticism. But as every human life is the life of the race in miniature, it would be better to teach children as God taught the race, love first, then law when love had been abused, then love again when law had uttered its sentence of condemnation and had convinced the heart of sin.

There are many Christians whose spirits are dwarfed, gnarled, and sour, because "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" have been the hard watch-words of their lives. Their theology has been : Do right. Do not cheat, nor steal, nor kill. Do right, and you will be right. A true theology teaches : Be right and you will do right. Do right and you will be right is the doctrine of obedience to law, of justification by works, instead of by faith. It is the religion of the Pharisees of Christ's day. It is the religion of the Jewish Law that had done its noble work and had come to its predicted end nineteen hundred years ago. The importance of a correct understanding of the relation of the Law—the Mosaic and Levitical economy—and the Gospel is so great that the subject is considered here among a few of the most important essentials of Christian growth.

The key to a correct understanding of the subject lies in the idea of progress. The Law preceded the Gospel, educationally as well as historically. If this is kept well in mind the fact that now claims our attention will be more readily understood.

The Gospel did not destroy but fulfilled the

Law. This distinction is not one of practical difference as to the final effect upon the continued activity of the Law; but it is rather a distinction regarding the manner in which the Law came into its inoperative condition. This distinction will become clearer as we proceed. The fact itself is proved, in the first place, from the nature and from the purpose of the Law.

The nature of the Law is such as to render it inoperative after a certain time, because its specific work is done. It is not destroyed in any offensive sense. It still lives in the larger moral law of the world. If the word destroy is used in this connection it must be understood to refer to the honorable completion of the good work of a good law. The Law was not a failure. God did not make a mistake that obliged him to repeal the old law. Paul who speaks of the Law as destroyed, says: "So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good." Rom. 7, 12. Not only is the Law good; but, unless we limit the wisdom or goodness of God, it is the best possible. The claim is not that the Law is best for men now; but that it was the best possible for men in that period of

their development for which it was intended. Here, for example, is a child's primer. We will suppose it is the best possible primer. It is not, however, the best possible text book for a young man in the high school.

This fitly represents the case of the Law in its present relations to men. The Law is rudimental in its nature. It was intended to be operative during the childhood of the race. And as fast as men saw clearly enough to follow a higher law, God gave it. "But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the term appointed of the father. So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law." Gal. 4, 1-4. See also Col. 2, 8-20.

As the Law is rudimental, followed by a law more mature, so it is intermediate. The period in moral history that it filled is intermediate between Abraham and Christ. "What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom

the promise hath been made." Gal. 3, 19. "But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor." 23-25.

The Law is also condemnatory. This is so because the Law is just, while man is sinful. God assumes the right to command, and to affix penalties for disobedience. The Law condemns all, because all have failed to obey. It appeals to the natural man, to man full of his self-will and sin. Man's justification is to be secured by perfect obedience. If he fails perfectly to obey he is in debt to the Law. "Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Gal. 5, 3. And he is under the curse of the Law. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." Gal. 3, 10. If he had obeyed he would have had life. "The law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them." v. 12. So the whole appeal is made to the carnal man, to man in his weakness, unchanged by regenera-

tion. The law is therefore carnal. "Who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." Heb. 7, 16. This appeal to the carnal nature was just; but it left men under condemnation because they failed to keep the Law. Absolute obedience was required. Men never have fulfilled this requirement. The Law, therefore, brought all men under condemnation. "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." Rom. 5, 12.

Thus the law enslaves men. It brings them into bondage until they pay the debt that has accumulated against them, the penalty of disobedience. This penalty can only be paid by obedience; but obedience is now even more difficult than it was at first, because sin predisposes the soul to sin. Moreover, if men could begin anew and thenceforth could live perfect lives, they could not do more than be perfect. No surplus of goodness can be saved up to cancel past sin. The past debt of disobedience remains unpaid, and by no human possibility can it ever be paid. The Law, holy, righteous and good, by its very nature

has been compelled to rivet the chains upon men because they are not holy, righteous or good. When the Law had done this its work was done and it became inoperative.

This conclusion is yet more clearly established from the purpose of the Law. Believing the Law to be of God, and believing that God is wise and good, we conclude beforehand that this universal condemnation into which the Law has brought men is the very condition into which it was intended to bring them. This is the true conclusion. The purpose of the Law was not to justify men, but to convince of sin. "Justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Gal. 2, 16. Even very wicked men are self-righteous. God can not develop a perfect moral being from a Pharisee until he first convinces the Pharisee that, with all his self-righteousness, he is a lost sinner, under the condemnation of the very law that he professes to keep so perfectly. The Law showed men that they were imperfect. It also brought much latent sin to light, and it left man without excuse when God imputed sin to him. "Now we know that what things soever the

law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God." Rom. 3, 19. See also 4, 15. 5, 13, 20. 7, 7-16.

It was the purpose of the Law to bring men to this sense of their sin and ruin and consequent need, that they might welcome Jesus. This was the Law's last duty. It completed its work in Christ, the Messiah, whom it long foretold. "For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10, 4. As this purpose is so definitely stated, and as it is so easily understood, we can see clearly that the Law, while it became inoperative, was yet not destroyed, but remained a dark background upon which, explaining and fulfilling it, the morning of the Christian era most gloriously dawned.

There are many texts that seem to set aside or to supersede the Law. A careful consideration of these, however, will prove them not to be inconsistent with the fact that the Law was not destroyed but that it was fulfilled by the Gospel.

Some of these texts refer to the ceremonial law. Peter's vision, recorded in the tenth and

eleventh chapters of Acts, clearly sets aside the ceremonial law of the clean and unclean. "Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and fowls of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." Acts 10, 9-15.

In the seventh chapter of First Corinthians and elsewhere, circumcision is mentioned as no longer of any importance. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God." 1 Cor. 7, 19.

In the tenth chapter of First Corinthians Paul taught the Corinthian Christians that

they might eat meat offered to idols, were it not for the sake of some weak brother whose conscience had not yet been adjusted to the new order of things. "If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast, and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake : conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's ; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience?" 1 Cor. 10, 27-30.

In the second chapter of his letter to the Colossians Paul speaks of the whole ceremonial law as "blotted out," "nailed to the cross," and "triumphed over." In all of these texts the joy of rescue from the curse of the Law, the joy of renewed life from the dead, the joy of passing from the dark reign of condemnation into the glorious reign of the law of mercy, and into the liberty of love in Christ—this joy is so manifestly the controlling influence in the writer's mind that he seems at times to frown at the old law. These texts show clearly that the Law had come to the end of its supremacy; but they do not teach that

it was in any hostile sense destroyed.

Some of these texts refer to the Law in general, the Mosaic and Levitical economy. Paul used the following figure to represent the fact that the Roman Christians were not under the Law and that they were at liberty to become subject to the law of Christ. "Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." Rom. 7, 1-4. The woman is bound to her husband while he lives; but when he is dead she is at liberty, and can be married to another man. Paul wrested his figure in the applica-

tion ; but his thought is clear. The Roman Christians were represented by the wife. The Law was the husband who died, and Christ was the other man to whom they were now at liberty to be married. Here the Law is spoken of as dead. The expression is certainly figurative, and can not mean more than that the Law is no longer in force, its mission having been accomplished. But Paul was not so much concerned to prove that the Law was no longer in force, as he was to convince the Roman Christians that they were free from its control. He was not thinking of the Law but of the Christians. It was doubtless this governing thought in his mind that caused him to wrest his figure and to speak of the Christians as dead to the Law instead of saying directly, as the figure requires, that the Law was dead. The result is the same ; the relation that formerly existed was ended.

Paul considered this question in other epistles also, especially in that to the Galatians, in which he taught them that their justification could not be accomplished by obedience to the Law, showing that the Law had passed away. The argument begins in the second chapter and continues into the fifth. In the eighteenth

verse of the second chapter he speaks of the Law as "destroyed." In the nineteenth verse he speaks of himself as "dead to the Law." In the third verse of the third chapter he rebukes the Galatians for seeking to be justified by obeying the Law. In the fourth chapter the allegory of the two covenants, the bond-woman and the free-woman, represents the Law as "cast out." In the second chapter of Ephesians Paul speaks of the Law as "abolished." In the eighth chapter of Hebrews it is spoken of as "vanishing away." In the light of what we know, however, these texts do not give us any serious trouble. Certainly they do not when we consider that Paul was made indignant by the continued effort of certain Judaizers to win these Christians to whom he wrote to trust in obedience to the Law for their justification. His handling of the Law in these texts was not intended so much to impress the people with its goodness as with the fact that, good or bad, its day of active power was over. In the heat of his argument he used these vivid expressions and figures, yet frequently pausing to notice by way of parenthesis that the Law was good; but that it had done its work, and that it could not save.

Other texts teach that the Law was an institution belonging exclusively to the Jews. Paul, reasoning that under the new dispensation neither circumcision availed anything, nor uncircumcision, inquired what advantage the Jews had then. He answered his own question by saying that to them belonged the covenants, the giving of the Law, the promises and the service. Theirs were the fathers. Christ came of their race. He represented those who were not Jews as strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God." Rom. 3, 1-2. "Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh." 9, 4-5. "Wherefore remember, that aforetime ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel,

and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world." Eph. 2, 11-12.

In the fifteenth chapter of Acts is the record of that memorable consultation of Paul and of the elders at Jerusalem, in which the relation of the Gentile Christians to the Law was considered. The decision reached was that the Gentiles were not to be brought under the yoke of the Law. They were not under it and they should not be required to come under it. This was a most important decision ; for, according to the Law, when any from among the Gentiles desired to be numbered among the people of the true God, they were compelled to be circumcised and to keep the Law—to become Jews by adoption. These elders in the Jewish-Christian church therefore recognized the fact that the Law was binding only upon the Jews. But the promises to the fathers included the whole world. These promises must be fulfilled under a broader rule than that of Jewish law. The Law, however, was not destroyed ; but rather the race turned from it to come into the broader fulfilment of its promises and commandments in the Messiah by itself foretold. And as the race turned from the Law it turned away with blessings.

Still other texts teach a change of law. In the fourth chapter of John, Jesus speaks to the woman at Jacob's well of a time when neither at Jerusalem nor in the mountain where she worshipped would men worship the Father; but when a spiritual service would take the place of form and of ceremony and of commandment. He farther informed her that in him, the Messiah, that time had come.

Yet more clearly, in the parables of the new patch upon the old garment, and of the new wine in old wineskins (Mat. 9. Mark 2. Luke 5), did Jesus show that the law was being changed to meet the new demands. The new law was based upon more comprehensive principles. These principles must be differently administered. The old forms would burst under the expansive pressure of the principles then coming into force in the moral world.

In the third chapter of Second Corinthians Paul speaks of "a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit." He speaks of the veiled glory of the old Mosaic dispensation as passing away, and he rejoices in the greater glory of the incoming ministration of the Spirit. "And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient

of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves ; but our sufficiency is from God ; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant ; not of the letter, but of the spirit : for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face ; which glory was passing away : how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory ? For if the ministration of condemnation is glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory." II Cor. 3, 4-11.

A change of law or a new law is farther spoken of as follows : " A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13, 34. " Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant ; not of the letter, but of the spirit : for the letter

killeth, but the spirit giveth life." II Cor. 3, 6. "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt." Heb. 8, 7-9. "Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth." I John 2, 8. But a careful study of these texts does not leave the impression that the Law became inoperative because it was inefficient; but because man was not morally strong enough to be saved by a law of absolute justice, untempered by mercy.

Some of these texts bring out clearly the contrast between the old law and the new. The old law was a law of commandment, given that men might be alarmed at their own weakness; the new law was a law of love, given that men, alarmed might be moved to turn for mercy to the God whom they had wronged. "He that

saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him."

1 John 2, 9-10. See also 1 Cor. 13, and the Sermon on the Mount.

The old law demonstrated that men, because of sin, were in bondage; the new law is called the law of liberty. "With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." Gal. 5, 1. "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." Jas. 1, 25. "So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty." 2, 12.

Under the old law men could be justified only by perfect obedience to the commandment; but under the new law, the discouraged man who has been brought under the curse because of disobedience, if he repents, can be saved by faith in God, through Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3, 16. See also 18. 5, 24. 6, 40,

47. 20, 31. Rom. 4, 4-16. Gal. 2, 16. 3, 1-6.

The old law was a law of death; the new law is a law of life. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." Rom. 8, 2. Through all this a mighty purpose runs. God is bringing to pass the salvation of the world.

Of these passages that seem to be hostile to the Law, there remain to be considered those that refer to a change of administration. In his parable of the vineyard (Mat. 21. Mark 12. Luke 20) Jesus represents God as a householder who planted a vineyard (the moral world) and let it out to husbandmen (the Jews), and who then returned to his country (Heaven). In the time of fruits he sent his servants (the prophets) to receive his portion. These servants the husbandmen abused and cast out. Finally he sent his son (Jesus). Him they slew. The chief priests and Pharisees understood that he spoke this parable against them. When it was asked what should be done with those wicked husbandmen, the answer was made: "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen." And Jesus adds: "The kingdom of God shall be taken

away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The Jewish law was fulfilled. The Jewish nation was destroyed. The kingdom of God passed into other hands for the administration of its new law.

The same thing is taught in the parable of the great supper (Mat. 22. Luke 14). A certain man (God) made a great supper (the Gospel) and bade many (the Jews) who made excuses and would not come. Then the master (God) sent out into the highways and hedges and brought in everybody (the Gentiles) and the house was filled. The epistles and the Acts are full of the same doctrine. Paul turned to the Gentiles when the Jews refused to hear the Gospel. To understand this subject well Galatians and Hebrews must be studied very comprehensively and with great care.

In this new administration the distinction between Jew and Gentile is not made. The Jew stands just where the Gentile stands, where all who are saved must stand, at the cross of Jesus Christ. "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that

call upon him : for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10, 12-13. "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free ; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12, 13. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female : for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3, 28. See also Eph. 2, 11-22. Col. 3, 11. Here the yoke of the old law and its curse fall off and the soul goes forth fetterless and free to love and to serve with joy.

Farthermore, Christ's relation to the Law is that of one who judges and fulfils but does not destroy.

At the time of Christ's advent the Jews were observing and teaching many customs as law, that were no part of the Law. Also many of the commandments of the Law they had grossly misunderstood and many of them they had abused. But worse than all else, they had missed the spirit of obedience. In his work of fulfilling the Law, Christ was compelled to discriminate between the real Law and the traditions of men. The traditions he ruthlessly cast out, and rebuked those who taught them.

The Law he explained and upheld. He showed that the Law had been modified at times to bring it within the reach of the people. It appears that Moses thus modified the law of marriage. Christ says that he did this because of the hardness of their hearts. But he says that it was not so in the beginning, and he now restores the original principle, assuming an authority superior to that of Moses. Christ also gave judgment as to the law of the Sabbath, and he kept the Sabbath according to his own judgment and not according to Jewish tradition. He justified his conduct in healing on the Sabbath upon the ground that the day was made for man, not man for the day. Where the Law said an eye for an eye, he taught men to love their enemies and to do good for evil. If in a few instances his doctrine seems to clash with the Law, yet, on the whole, he and the Law are evidently at one in spirit, and he is judge of the Mosaic law as well as of the Christian law.

Christ also discriminated between obedience and its counterfeits. The counterfeit obedience of the scribes and Pharisees was not satisfactory, not even when they kept the letter of the Law, for their hearts were far from God. The

true spirit of obedience is not servile. To refrain from taking life but to continue to hate one's brother, Christ did not consider obedience to the law "thou shalt not kill." The true spirit of obedience would lead one not to hate his brother; but rather to love him. Its spirit is mercy and not sacrifice. The Jews had performed their sacrifices, but love and mercy they had forgotten. And in this very loss of the spirit of God's law lay their condemnation. Christ did not rebuke the Jews particularly for any lack of external obedience, but he continually rebuked them for the uncleanness of the inward man. The world had not comprehended the fundamental principle by which alone righteousness can be attained. Christ came to teach the law of love as all-comprehensive. The formidable Jewish law, he said, was fulfilled in a word, and that word was love. True obedience must be love-begotten. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word." John 14, 23. See Mat. 7, 12. 12, 1-13. 19, 17-22. 23, 4-36. Mark 10, 17-22. 12, 30-34.

Christ having defined the Law, fulfilled it. He did this in part by fulfilling the Messianic prophecies. This established and confirmed

the Law. But it also brought the Law to the very end that it had itself foretold. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." Mat. 8, 17. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4, 17-21. See also 7, 18. seq. Gal. 3, 19, seq.

Christ further fulfilled the Law by embodying in himself the substance of its types and shadows. The Jewish ceremonies were largely shadows. Christ, the body itself came, and the shadows gave place to the substance. When the very presence comes men look no longer at the shadow. The paschal lamb—

what was it but the shadow of the Lamb of God slain once for all on Calvary. The offering for sin—what was it but Christ offered once for all. The Priesthood—what was it but the type of our great high Priest who is touched by the feeling of our infirmity. The blood of bulls and of goats, the sprinklings, the baptisms and the washings are all gone before the substance of spiritual worship. Feasts, fasts, new moons and sabbaths, all are outgrown, and the glorious Son of God stands in the midst, radiant in the light of the high noon. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's." Col. 2, 16-17. See also Heb. 1, 1-4. 4, 14—5, 10. 7, 11—10, 18. Whatever of commandment or of ordinance Christ teaches as belonging to the Christian dispensation must henceforth be learned from the new law and no longer from the old.

Christ still farther fulfilled the Law by obeying it. We find him careful to send the leper whom he had healed to offer the gift commanded by Moses. But we find him particular that the spirit of the Law shall always

be most prominent in his obedience. "And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." Mat. 8, 4. "Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." 23, 1-3.

Again, Christ revealed the principle that takes precedence of all law. The principle is universal love. Loyalty to God is the first result of the operation of this principle; and love and loyalty to all men, born of love and loyalty to God, is the second and almost simultaneous result. But, alas for the selfishness of men! for it blinded their eyes to the love of God. Then they began, with eyes bereft of sight, shorn of superhuman strength, with hearts love-lost, to wind the treadmill of a slavish life. The passions burned and hatred usurped Love's throne. Then the commandment came ruling where love would fain have ruled, and the great battle of the race against its God of love began. "Thou shalt" and

“thou shalt not,” spoken in stern tones, took the place of smiles and loving loyalty. But how could men know that there was nothing better than the love of God until they had tried to find something better? Certainly we know it by their experience. So the commandment came to prove to men that everywhere except in loyalty and in love to God and to man, death lurked.

When the lesson had been thoroughly taught men, and had been wrought into history so that all generations might learn it from the sad experience of Israel, then, without the delay of an unnecessary hour, God sent his Son to buy back enslaved men with the purchase price of his own humiliation and suffering, and so to glorify the storm-cloud of man's disobedience and of God's wrath with the glorious sunrise of universal love. And now, since the new era of moral history has begun, men must look to Jesus Christ, and to him alone, for their moral law. “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 13, 34. “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.” 15, 12. See also II Cor. 3.

From these considerations we learn that God is giving guidance to the moral development of the race. Let us be glad. For at times our souls have been perplexed and we have been anxious to know what the moral issue is to be. But in every era there has been a sufficient number of faithful Christians to warrant a large reception of the truth and to ensure it a large following. But the number of those who do not follow is so appalling that we are glad that God is guiding. Our confidence in him enables us to see the innumerable company of those "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Let us keep our eyes upon these rather than upon the moving mass that proves the outer darkness, also, to be peopled.

We learn also that the life of the godly in this Christian era is wonderfully large and full and free. It may expand to the measure of God's immeasurable love. It is constricted only by its own internal power of expansion, it is bound only by its own selfishness and wilfulness. This life is as full as love always is. Silence may fall between those who love each other, but hearts beat on and gentle ministrations speak. So the life of those who

love God is filled to its ever increasing capacity with love's ministries. This life is as free as will. No command compels, no hostile force restrains, no will opposes; but a great love possesses; and the nerves of love are tireless, and her feet are swift.

We learn finally that all efforts to keep the commandments, and to make ourselves better, or to establish ourselves or our doctrine by means of the old Law, while they would have been commendable two thousand years ago, are only displeasing to God now. Such efforts are actual barriers in the way of our progress toward that life of all-absorbing and of all-controlling love that can be found only by such faith in Jesus Christ as leads to complete self-surrender. To love God more than all beside—this is to be so wholly free, that the soul does not wish to use its liberty as license to sin; but, as the soul and God are allies, so the soul hates sin with the holy hatred of God.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCHES.

Are churches essential to Christian growth? Many may be inclined at first thought to give a negative answer. Perhaps further consideration may at least show that the question is a fair one, and possibly it may lead to an affirmative answer. If the question were, Can one be a Christian even though he is not a member of a church? the answer would be, He can. But a Christian who refuses to take his place in a church endangers his Christian growth. Every Christian grows; but by Christian growth something more is here meant than a mere theoretical growth, a growth that we suppose must be going on but that we can not discern. When Christian growth is mentioned here, a fuller, freer growth is meant; a growth that can be seen and felt; a growth that does not find one always a growing child, but rather that finds one becoming a man.

There is, no doubt, a kind of growth in the kingdom of God apart from churches. Every

one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ to the salvation of his soul is a member of the kingdom of God. The kingdom includes every one who so believes, whether he is a member of a church or not. Churches are organizations, within the kingdom, of such members of the kingdom as are more fully enlightened concerning Christian duty and privilege, and who are ready to bear responsibility and to do active work for the spread of the kingdom. Theoretically at least, in a lower and less worthy sense, every member of the kingdom grows ; but growth in churches is more vigorous and more rapid. The kingdom is like a great field. The churches are the portions of the field that are well tilled. The portions of the kingdom that are not included in the churches are like the fence-corners, the stony places and the swampy places of the field. The grain is carefully sown and is carefully tilled in the cultivated portions of the field, and there it grows luxuriantly. In other portions of the field it grows in but a sickly way, and if it ripens at all it ripens late.

Some will certainly call to mind the evils that exist in churches. That evils exist in churches may not be denied ; but greater

evils exist among Christians who are not members of churches. The wrongs that are in churches are there because those who commit them are so inconstant in the church life. Some others will call to mind certain ripe Christian characters that have developed outside of churches. It must be granted that such cases exist; but they are exceedingly rare. Understanding that reference is now had to the larger growth of the Christian, it will probably appear to the honest student that churches are essential to Christian growth.

That the churches are essential to Christian growth is a direct inference from the fact that churches are a part of the Gospel plan.

Jesus said that he would build a church. "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Mat. 16, 18. It is very evident from this reference that a church was a part of our Lord's plan for the redemption of the world.

Jesus spoke of a church again in his instructions to his disciples concerning their manner of dealing with an offending brother. "And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church

also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." Mat. 18, 17. This reference to a church is incidental. It suggests the probability that Jesus said more about churches than the record shows. These two references leave no doubt as to the fact that churches were a part of God's plan for the world.

Farthermore, Jesus declared the foundation principle of the churches. "Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be

bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ." Mat. 16, 13-20. This much disputed and much abused portion of the New Testament is not easily understood. But careful attention to exactly what passed between Peter and Jesus will greatly aid us in understanding the passage. The whole meaning centers around the question, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Then follows the estimate that men had put upon him. Then Jesus put the question to those few who had been with him and who had known him best. Peter answered for them, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." At the close of this conversation, Jesus cautioned them not to tell any man that he was the Christ. The central idea here is the fact that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." This fact was revealed to Peter by the Father. Peter had declared it. Here are three things involved. The fact that Jesus is "the Christ the Son of the living God," which for brevity we will call simply, the fact. First, then, the fact. Secondly, the fact, revealed by the Father to Peter. And thirdly, the fact,

revealed by the Father to Peter, declared by Peter. The fact, the revelation, the declaration. Because the Father had made the revelation of this fact to Peter, and because Peter had declared it, Jesus said, "Thou art Peter—a fragment of rock—and upon this rock—a whole rock—I will build my church." Jesus plays upon Peter's name. The reason for the play upon the name, the reason why Jesus calls attention to the significance of the name, is that the Father had revealed the fact to Peter, and that Peter had declared it.

If we can generalize this, we shall have that rock upon which Jesus said he would found his church. Is not this then the foundation of the churches? The fact that Jesus is "the Christ the Son of the living God," revealed by the Father to individuals, and by them confessed. This principle is particularly significant. It shows not only that churches are a part of God's plan, but that they are the very centre of that plan. The churches were to be built up of men and of women who had become conscious of the Messiahship and of the Sonship of Jesus, and who would declare that which had been revealed to them. Peter received this knowledge of the Deity of Jesus

from the Father; but he knew only his own experience. That he did know, and that he declared. Experimental knowledge of Jesus, and open declaration of that knowledge, is the bed-rock of the churches; and those who have had this experience, and who have declared it, are the stones with which the walls of the churches themselves are built. It is the plan of God, that so far as they will, these loose stones should be built into these structures.

That the churches are a part of God's plan is farther evident from the fact that Jesus provided for the completion of their organization. In the text quoted last, authority is given to Peter to lead in this work. The other apostles, also, understood that it was their mission to organize churches and to instruct them. This they actually did.

At first the word translated church referred to a company of people called out to some assembly by the town crier. See Acts 19, 32-41, where the word is translated assembly. This is the word that was used to designate the assembly of Christians at Jerusalem. "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout

the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles." Acts 8, 1. After this dispersion companies of Christians associated themselves in other places. Up to the time of the dispersion there had been only one church, the church at Jerusalem. Afterward, the dispersed believers, though organized in local societies, were sometimes thought of as the scattered Jerusalem church. "So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied." Acts 9, 31. Thus there arose a collective use of the word as the name for all those who were members of any of the local churches. The word is used but rarely in this collective sense. See Eph. 1, 22-23. 3, 10. 5, 23-32. Col. 1, 18-24.

Very soon after the Saviour's ascension, therefore, we find many churches actually existing as the result of apostolic effort. The organization of these churches was a part of God's plan, or else the apostles greatly misunderstood their mission.

Still further the thorough organization of these churches proves that they were considered an important part of the plan of redemp-

tion. The churches were not mere assemblies without order, law, or officer. They had a constitution that could not be changed either by two-thirds majority or by an unanimous vote. The teaching of Jesus as interpreted by the apostles was and is the only constitution of the churches and the only true rule of faith and of practice. The apostles were ordained of God to be teachers of his word. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Mat. 16, 19. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." Acts 2, 42.

There were officers also. These were of two orders, the special or extraordinary officers, as the apostles, Paul and others. And the ordinary officers. Of these there were also two orders, elders or bishops, also called ministers, pastors, etc.; and deacons. Concerning elders we notice the following references: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church." Acts 20, 17. "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock,

in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." 28. "For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not selfwilled, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre." Titus 1, 7. This order of officers was appointed in all the churches. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge." Titus 1, 5. The other order was that of deacons, often called ministers and servants of the churches. "I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreæ." Rom. 16, 1. "But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things." Eph. 6, 21. "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Phil. 1, 1.

The duties of these officers, and particularly their qualifications are specified. See 1 Timothy, 3. A large part of the work of the apostles was that of organizing and instructing these churches. Of the fourteen epistles of

Paul, five of the most important are addressed directly to churches. One is addressed to saints and bishops and deacons; this is really to a church. Two others are addressed to bodies of saints, definitely located; really to churches, though the word church is not used. One is addressed to all those at Rome who love God, probably a church. Two are addressed to Timothy; in these the qualification of church officers is considered. One is addressed to Titus; in this he speaks of the elders appointed in every city. One is addressed to Philemon. And one (probably) is addressed to the Hebrews.

It is evident that the churches were either a very important factor in God's plan for the world, or else the Savior and the apostles very seriously misunderstood his plan. This means, to all who believe the New Testament, that the churches are, beyond doubt, a most important part of that plan. The significance of this is evident. The Christian believes that he will grow best by conforming to God's plan. And in proportion to the strength of his Christian character, does one lack both the presumption and the inclination to substitute his own judgment for what God has taught. If it has been made clear that the churches are a part

of the Gospel plan, whether they are very essential to Christian growth or not will be determined, in the mind of each, by the degree of his confidence in God's judgment as superior to his own.

That Churches are essential to Christian growth is, again, a direct inference from the fact that to them have been intrusted the great evangelizing enterprises of the kingdom of God in the world.

In the first place the Gospel itself has always been in the care of the churches. Jesus, the great Head of the church, brought it from Heaven. He taught it to the twelve, and he gave them the promise of the Holy Spirit to bring all that he had taught them to their remembrance when they should need to use it. So much of the Gospel as was necessary for the instruction and for the salvation of the race these faithful men, aided by the promised Spirit, put into writing. These writings, many of them in the form of letters to the churches or to individuals, preserve to us the teachings that are essential both to our salvation and to that of the whole world.

And often in these letters, with great fervency and with strong adjuration, the churches

or the individuals to whom the letters were written are charged to keep the doctrines pure ; the churches being called upon to separate themselves from sinfulness and from heresy. " And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church : and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." Mat. 18, 17. " Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers : for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity ? or what communion hath light with darkness ? And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever ? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols ? for we are a temple of the living God ; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." II Cor. 6, 14-18. " Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which

they received of us." II Thes. 3, 6. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them." Rom. 16, 17. "O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith." I Tim. 6, 20-21.

The apostolic days drew to their close. Peter was crucified. By the sword of the headsman, from his shipwrecks, his many journeys, and his long imprisonment, Paul was released. Then the hunted believers in the Lord Jesus realized more than ever what Saul of Tarsus had become to the churches through the grace of God. The few letters penned by his own hand or by the hand of his scribe were cherished as priceless. The two solitary epistles of Peter were carefully preserved. These apostolic letters were read and re-read until they were worn and soiled. Then copies were carefully made, and these copies were cherished and read and copied. The living voices could no more be heard. The inspired

pens were dry forever. These precious documents were received with love, and were guarded with jealous care. So there always have been reliable copies of the new covenant of God's grace, preserved by those who loved the Gospel with fervor sufficient to lead them to martyrdom rather than that they should allow these copies of the Gospel to be changed, either in manuscript or in practice.

And who, unless the churches will do this, will guard the Bible in the closing decade of the nineteenth century, when Science jostles Sensibility aside with laughter, and when Logic usurps the throne of Love? That the unsparing biblical criticism of the present age is destructive of much that the churches have treasured cannot be doubted; but this can easily be, and yet the churches be left nearer the truth as it was taught by the apostles than they have often been in the past, or than they now are. If the Bible is what Christians believe it to be, essentially the word of God, when the fires have passed over it we shall still have it, and the smell of fire will not be upon it. The Bible challenges the severest tests to which human thought can subject it. The claims it makes are so tremendous that a

thoughtful age will not take it without the severest scrutiny. So much the better for the Bible. The more keenly it is studied so much the more potent will be its utterances, if they are true.

And yet if men would understand the Bible, they must study it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God." 1 Cor. 2, 11-12. Every author has the right to say by what method of study his work can be best understood. And a student has no right to condemn his author until he has endeavored to put himself into his author's place and to follow his instructions in so far as they are declared to be necessary to a perfect understanding of his thought. Let science and philosophy do their work on the Bible. It is a good work. But if the Bible can be interpreted and justified by science or by philosophy alone, then it is false; for it claims to deal with truths that the unregenerate mind, be-

cause it is unregenerate, cannot understand. Of course, therefore, the unregenerate student will seek to cast out what he cannot, upon a purely human basis, understand or justify. It remains for the churches to educate their ministers and their laymen to the same degree of worldly knowledge that unregenerate scholars possess and so to demonstrate the fact that the fundamental truth of the Bible can be satisfactorily understood if the student of the Bible is a Christian. The churches also, if they would save the world by means of the Bible, must show a life, drawn from the teaching of the Bible, for which the unregenerate scholar cannot account.

The churches are the home of the Bible. The Bible has made the churches, and in them it will ever find its warmest friends and its only intelligent defenders. The Christian who is outside of a church is out of the battle, out of the burden, and very largely out of the blessing.

But beyond this, the proclamation of the Gospel is also intrusted to the churches. Public worship must be maintained by the churches. Will those Christians who are not members of churches sustain the public worship of God, if

the churches should cease to do so? Who are they who have filled the world with unnumbered sacred shrines, where, in peace and in quiet, the souls of men may find at will the soothing or the inspiring influences of the public worship of Almighty God? Whose money, whose sacrifices, whose prayers and tears have been wrought into these houses of God? Those of the kingdom-Christian? Or has it always been the churches that have been willing to make these places of worship attractive to the sinful world; that by means of beauty and of comfort, of sermon and of song men might be enticed to God? Are the men whose Christian lives are growing grandly and who are called to give themselves to the Christian ministry coming forth from the ranks of the kingdom-Christians? Are they not from among the most devoted members of our churches? Who support our institutions of Christian learning where these men are trained for their work? The kingdom-Christians? Or are these schools sustained by those who are the foremost in influence and service in the churches?

Our Sunday-school workers are members of churches. This vast army does not rise up on Sunday morning from ambush in the fence-

corners and in the swamp-lands of the kingdom of God. These workers have been in the midst of the field all through the burden and heat of the day; in the prayer-meeting, in the sick-room, by the sinner's side, or in the sacred circle at home, ministering to Jesus in the persons of those who need help or sympathy. God bless these faithful church-members! But perhaps we had better breathe our prayers over the kingdom-Christians, they have such a "lean and hungry look," and they are such little waifs. God pity them!

What would become of the missionary enterprises if the churches should disband? What would become of the heathen? Did the Master say: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation"? Have you kingdom-Christians gone? You ought to be about it; the time is shortened.

All these glorious enterprises have been intrusted to the churches. It is a great heritage both of sacrifice and of privilege into which the churches have come. And if activity in Christian service is as essential to Christian life as activity of body is essential to physical life, and as activity of mind is essential to mental life, then all these duties of the churches are essential to Christian growth.

The relation that Jesus sustains to the churches makes it evident that churches are essential to Christian growth.

This relation is expressed in the figure of a human body. "Now ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof." 1 Cor. 12, 27. "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1, 22-23. See also Col. 1, 18.

A closer and more vital relation than this can not be expressed in human language. What is the relation to Christ of those who are not members of his church, his body? Perhaps they are his friends, perhaps they love him; but they are not his body, he is not their head in that privileged sense in which this relation exists between Christ and his church.

This relation is farther shown by the love that Jesus is declared to have for the church. He gave himself for it, that he might prepare it for himself. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water

with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5, 25-27.

The tenderness of this love is expressed in terms the most sacred and beautiful. The church is a chaste virgin, espoused to her beloved. "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ." II Cor. II, 2.

The kingdom-Christians will probably enter in to the marriage as friends of the bridegroom; but the church is his bride. This nearer relation to Jesus is essential to any large growth in Christian life.

Finally, the ordinances have been intrusted to the churches for their exclusive use. There are only two of these: baptism and the Lord's supper. These were both instituted by Jesus.

Baptism comes first in the order of observance. Those only are qualified for baptism who have first believed on Jesus. The commission to the apostles establishes this order. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Mat. 28, 19. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16, 15-16. The apostles followed this order from the very beginning, and there is no instance on record in which they departed from it. "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2, 37-38. "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip." 8, 12-13.

Baptism is the door into the churches, and so it belongs to the churches and not to the kingdom. In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul says the members of that church were all baptized into one body, which he says is the body of Christ. "For in one Spirit were we all

baptized into one body." 1 Cor. 12, 13. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof." 27. Those who were baptized, were baptized into Christ, who is the head of the church, whose body the church is. "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" Rom. 6, 3.

Baptism is also symbolical of the death, of the burial and of the resurrection of Jesus; and, with him, of the death, of the burial and of the resurrection of those who have believed in him and who follow him in this ordinance. "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." Rom. 6, 3-4. "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." Col. 2, 12.

The Saviour was himself baptized; and, as we have seen from quotations already made, he commanded those who believed to be baptized.

But if one obeys this command he must become a member of a church, for baptism is the door into a church. This command, therefore, amounts to a command to become members of a church.

The Lord's supper comes after baptism in the order of observance. It is an ordinance belonging to the churches. There is no instance on record in the New Testament where any ever partook of the supper who had not first become members of a church through faith and baptism. In the earliest records of apostolic practice we find those continuing in the observance of the supper who had believed and who had been baptized. "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." Acts 2, 41-42. In writing to the Corinthian church, Paul rebuked them for the abuse of the Lord's supper and gave them instructions concerning it, as if, as a matter of course, it was an ordinance of the churches. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The

bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar? What say I then? that a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" 1 Cor. 10, 16-22. See 11, 18-34.

Here also we find the symbolical element. As baptism symbolizes burial to the life of sin and resurrection with Christ to newness of life, so the Lord's supper symbolizes the nourishing of the soul by Christ, the living bread that came down from heaven. To this symbolical feast the kingdom-Christian has no right to come. And herein he sustains a great loss.

The Lord's supper is not, primarily, a communion of Christians with one another. It is

that communion of each one with God in which the soul is nourished by the Spirit of God. If ever the Christian loves Jesus, his Saviour, it is at that hour when he is commemorating his Lord's death till he come. Out of this communion with Jesus grows the accompanying communion of saints. Then, if ever, the heart opens to the sunlight; the shadows of distrust, of malice and of hatred flee away. The soul is warmed and fed. At these sacred times our hearts are made one and we love to sing :

“ Blessed be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love :
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

“ Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers ;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.”

There is good reason for these ordinances or the Saviour would not have established them. Let no one presume to say that they are unimportant. The judgment of the Son of God is safest, and we shall do best to follow his advice. These ordinances may mean more in

the plan of God than we suppose. But they certainly mean much. Everyone who has submitted to them in the proper manner and in the proper spirit knows that by means of them he has been brought into closer sympathy with Jesus in his work for men, and so into closer sympathy with the sin-cursed race to save which he came.

In the churches, with all their faults, are still to be found the conditions best suited to Christian growth. It is God's plan that this should be so. Why should any one work to his own plan when God will plan for him? The great enterprises of the evangelization of the world are intrusted to the churches. Here is the agency of every saving enterprise—the agency appointed by Jesus himself. Why should not those who love Jesus work in the way he has appointed them? In the churches is the atmosphere, sometimes vitiated, it is true, but after all purer than anywhere else in this evil world, in which the Christian will thrive best. Here is the soil into which the roots of the Christian life will strike deepest. All considerations, of God-laid plan, of God-appointed activity, and of hallowed association, unite in declaring that churches are essential to Christian growth.

CHAPTER IV.

LOYALTY TO TRUTH.

Truth is unchangeable and eternal. It can not be permanently overthrown, for it is the real being and the normal condition. Of very necessity it must at last be the final word in every controversy, and the survivor of every mortal combat. It cannot be changed by never so many lies. The truth that water will flow down hill cannot be gainsaid by all the stand-pipes of the world; sometime they will crumble and totter and fall; with murmuring laughter will their waters run down to the sea.

The truth in its fulness is with God. He made all things and established their relations according to his own will and nature. Truth has its origin in the being and nature of God. God wishes men to be like him. The realities of the material and of the spiritual universe he desires men, so far as they are able, to know and to love. He desires that every one should not cast himself into the fire, or into the water, or into Hell. He does not want a

rebel in all his kingdom. And this desire is prompted, not more for his own sake, than for the sake of his subjects. God, the source and the soul of truth, desires men to be loyal to truth.

Loyalty to truth is a condition of the soul.

It is not a mode of life. One may speak the truth, and yet he may not be loyal to it. One may be honest in his business, and yet he may not be loyal to the truth. One may be a preacher of the truth, and even he may not be loyal to the truth that he preaches. The outward life may seem to be true, and yet the man who lives this life may be untrue. The scribes and Pharisees were punctilious observers of outward appearances of truth, but Christ called them hypocrites and liars. Perhaps the religious world is in better condition to-day; but if conformity to truth in life and in worship is only outward, then this conformity is not loyalty to truth.

God desires "truth in the inward parts." This is primarily a condition of soul. It is not an outward relation, but an inward condition. The important consideration is not how a man acts regarding the truth; but what he himself is regarding truth. The person

whose outward life is controlled by expediency will sometime find it expedient to be false. Whately says: "‘Honesty is the best policy’ but he who acts on that principle is not an honest man."

Loyalty to truth involves all the faculties of the soul.

It is a condition of love. Expediency has nothing to do with it. The soul that is loyal to the truth, loves truth. In life, in death, this soul and truth are wedded and they will not be divorced. Duty is not once named between them. The soul that is loyal to truth does not ask, waiting, reluctant: Must I go with you? But flushed and eager it says: Wait, I will go with thee, for I love thee. But this love of the loyal soul for truth is not an unmeaning passion.

It is governed by knowledge. There cannot be love for that which is not known, although to inspire love the object need not be perfectly known. The object in the case before us, is truth. The soul must apprehend truth before it can be loyal to truth. But, by a kind of first act, the soul realizes a difference between truth in general—that is, truth of every kind and from every source—and untruth; and it

concludes that the side of truth is the lovable side. Intellectual activity, conscious or unconscious, precedes the love of truth in general.

After the soul has learned to love truth in general then the intellect is consciously and constantly active, seeking to find out the real facts in any particular case in order that the love of the soul may be rightly bestowed. If a falsehood has been loved, supposing it to be truth, all that is necessary to influence the loyal soul to put away the falsehood is to convince it of its error. When the error is discovered there is no farther effort. The soul had mistaken its enemy for a friend. When the mask is off, the soul burns a moment for shame, rebukes the intellect and its own intuition, and welcomes the truth. Thus loyalty to truth becomes a goad to the intellect, insisting upon thorough examination. So, of course, the loyal soul will delay decision on any particular case until the intellect has done its work.

Loyalty to truth is, therefore, more than loyalty to conscience. Conscience renders verdict according to truth so far as it knows truth, and urges to obedience. Conscience is satisfied with what the soul already knows. Loyalty to

truth insists upon knowing more, so that conscience may judge more wisely. It subpoenas witnesses, and insists upon a new trial before conscience.

Loyalty to truth also implies the foregone consent of the will. It involves the committal of the soul to truth in general, so that the soul, even before it knows what any particular truth may demand, loves that truth.

We find, therefore, that loyalty to truth involves the action of the intellect in tireless investigation; it involves the action of the conscience in the constant exercise of its function of moral judge and of reprover, compelling it to revise old decisions and to make new ones; it involves the response of the will with alacrity and with power because the whole soul is moved with love for truth, and demands immediate and decided action upon the rendering of the judgment.

Loyalty to truth manifests itself in obedience to the truth.

The result of this condition of soul will be action according to truth, both in the attempt to know it, and in the attempt to do it. And, first, in the attempt to know it. The initial attempt should be to know absolute truth—

that is, truth unmodified by circumstances. While this attempt is being made, expediency, conciliation, selfishness and other considerations, all storm the soul demanding modification of the truth. An individual may be carrying on an investigation with the simple intention, as he supposes, of finding out the exact truth; and yet, because he lacks loyalty, he may be unconsciously moulding everything to the pattern of his personal desire. Or this modification may be partly conscious; although the individual will not admit even to himself that his consideration of the subject will not bring him to the absolute truth in the case. He hopes to find the truth as it is modified by circumstances. And then the circumstances are not traced to their source in possible selfishness and disloyalty to truth. Real loyalty will hold one to a steady search for the absolute truth.

After this is found and clearly understood, the same loyalty will still hold the soul steadily to its work until it has found out, also, in what way, perhaps by what compromises, this absolute truth can be brought into vital contact with circumstances. This distinction is of vital importance. It makes all the difference

between truth and falsehood in the character whether the soul views truth through the distorting lenses of sin, or whether, with clarified vision, it views truth from the standpoint of "the Father of lights, with whom there can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." In the latter case, absolute truth is always made the point of departure in every application. In the former case, it is truth made conformable to certain given circumstances that is taken for absolute truth. This modified truth is then applied to other circumstances. The application here of this modified truth does not always lead to the same result as that which would be reached if the absolute truth were applied directly to these different circumstances. The application of truth to circumstances is like using a measure in cutting wood. The first stick is carefully measured by a given standard. After that some careless people take, each time, the last stick cut with which to measure the next cut. If after several cuts have been made, the last stick is compared with the original standard, it will often be found to differ considerably from it. The only safe way is to use the original measure for each cut.

The most practical application of this principle to Christians is in the study of the Bible. In the Bible we have certain absolute truth. Here is the original standard. But how much more willing Christians are to read religious books and tracts, and to hear sermons, than they are to study the Bible for themselves. Yet the absolute truth of the Bible is modified more or less by passing through the personality of even the most unbiased student. Are not the various creeds of Christendom possible only because men study creeds and catechisms instead of studying the Bible itself? The person who loves the truth more than he loves the teaching of his fathers, more than he loves the teaching of his denomination, more than he loves his own will and his personal pleasure, will seek to know truth at its sources. It is fortunate that, for all practical purposes, this is possible in the case of every Christian who can read his native tongue, for the Bible is printed in all languages.

This condition of soul will manifest itself, also, in the attempt to do the truth. And to do it exactly as one understands it. If a lie appears, it is not a lie in the intention but in the understanding. It is the expression of the

case as the man understands it. And in order to be loyal the individual must so express himself. He may be misinformed, but he is loyal to truth. Such an individual is to be considered honest; but he should be better informed. The lie is not moral, it may not be logical; but it may result simply from lack of knowledge. Loyalty to truth does not, then, necessarily imply obedience to absolute truth; but it does imply obedience to truth exactly as one understands it.

But just here is the point of departure in most cases. At this point expediency, conciliation and selfishness again storm the soul, and demand the privilege of exercising personal feeling in the matter of obedience to the truth as the soul exactly knows it. The individual may admit that his action is not exactly right; but he will plead in excuse his general good behavior and the wrong deeds of others. This is disloyalty. It is love of self; not love of truth. Here untrue action originates. Here could be found the switches that have turned men's souls most frequently out of the way of truth. Just a little modification of truth to accommodate circumstances is urged. Then this action is excused by saying that circumstances must be considered in order

to get at the exact truth in any particular case. A fallacy, the subtler because it has a certain truth in it. To this truth also the loyal man will be true ; but he who is disloyal will make this an excuse to favor his selfishness.

The denominational differences that arise from not seeking for truth at its sources are fostered here. If all Christians were fully loyal to the Word of God, both in their interpretation and in their obedience, these differences would vanish. Loyalty to truth manifests itself in exact obedience to the truth exactly as one understands it ; and back of this, loyalty to truth requires a love for absolute truth that insists upon every possible effort of the soul to apprehend truth as it is with God.

Loyalty to truth is essential to the development of Christian character.

The Christian is growing into the likeness of Jesus, who called himself the truth. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." John 14, 6. Was Christ true? Then the Christian must be true. When we find Christ before Pilate, saying: "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," we

feel the fitness of his words to his character, and we expect to see him crucified with unwavering fidelity. Nor can we find in all his life one instance where he ever sacrificed the truth. He was truth. Indeed loyalty to truth is not so much the loving response of the soul to truth, as it is the vitalization of the soul by truth. When the Christian is grown he will be like Jesus. Every disloyal purpose is a spot, eating fast and eating faster, that, if possible before the soul awakes to its condition, it may wholly consume the character into its own deadly organism.

Farthermore, Christian character cannot be formed without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Without his aid the Bible is a sealed book. The springs of Christian character are in the Bible. The Holy Spirit forms the channel through which the living waters flow into the soul. From this channel men must receive these living waters. The Holy Spirit desires to be the friend of every man, and to whisper to his soul the principles of Christian character.

But the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth."

John 14, 16. See also 15, 26. 16, 13. 1 John 5, 7. As love and loyalty to the Holy Spirit are essential to Christian character, so, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, loyalty to truth is essential to Christian character. Is the guidance of the Holy Spirit worth anything to men? Then let them be careful how they offend him by modifying truth to suit their own wills, or by rendering so heartless an obedience to truth as really not to obey it at all. As the Spirit's special work has to do with truth, he is most seriously offended by disloyalty to it. Those who would have the Holy Spirit for counselor and guide must love truth.

This condition of soul has been prominent in the best characters the world has known. The list of those who, for the sake of the truth as they understood it, have given their lives up willingly, is long. In many cases the sacrifice may have been unnecessary, and frequently it may not have been a sacrifice to absolute truth, but to prejudice and passion; yet it cannot be doubted that in obedience to their convictions, the martyrs were loyal, however much they failed of loyalty in the investigation or in the lack of investigation that resulted in

those convictions. In the noblest of these characters we recognize also so much passion and selfwill that we despair of attaining fully to this ideal condition of soul. Nevertheless, these noblest of men have been characterized by their loyalty to truth. To these men, in recognition of their sympathy with God and of their likeness to him, the world has always paid an unobtrusive reverence.

We have now seen that loyalty to truth is a condition of the soul. That it is not a mode of life; but that it is a condition of intense and unselfish love of truth. That it is not merely love; but that it involves every faculty of the soul. The intellect is goaded on to know the whole truth because lack of knowledge frequently causes love to be misplaced. The conscience sits in judgment upon the knowledge of the soul. And the springs of power are wound up; the will is nerved to strike for truth because the whole soul is moved.

Obedience results. The soul scorns selfishness. It will not, by any sort of subtle sophistry, deceive itself for the sake of excusing itself from exact knowledge and from perfect obedience. Truth and the loyal soul are wedded; they love each other; they are one. To

cheat truth is to cheat the loyal soul's own self. It is not in this soul to tell a lie; not even a white lie. A white lie! There is no lie blacker than a white lie; as there is no place of death more deadly than the place that seems all life; as there is no devil so devilish as the devil clothed in the white garments of an angel. The soul that loves the truth hates a lie. If a soul has learned to love the gloaming of the shadow of a lie, he has already turned traitor to the truth.

We have seen also that this spirit of loyalty to truth is essential to Christian character. Because Jesus, the Christian's Saviour and pattern, is the Truth. Because the Holy Spirit, the Christian's interpreter and guide, is the Spirit of truth. And because the history of those Christian characters that have been most illustrious, has proved these principles to be correct. Let men be true at the center of being. For, if not, the very processes of the soul become vitiated, and the power to discern truth is gone. Rudderless, chartless, compassless, on an ocean—an ocean, the soul drifts—drifts.

CHAPTER V.

FAITH.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Certainly, then, faith should claim our attention as one of the essentials of Christian growth. The subject is given great prominence throughout the New Testament. The word for believe and its synonyms occurs two hundred forty-six times there. The word for faith and its synonyms occur two hundred forty-four times. And the word for faithful, trusted, and the like, occurs sixty-seven times. This alone might not be particularly significant; but in many places where the word occurs several verses are given to the discussion of the subject. The word is one that cannot be often introduced without introducing the subject also. It is therefore evident that faith is one of the two or three subjects that are considered very fully in the New Testament. What the New Testament teaches on this subject will claim our attention in this chapter.

Faith may be defined as confidence in the

reliability of a person or thing. In by far the majority of cases the person to whom reference is made in the New Testament is God, in some one of his three persons. But there are a sufficient number of references to confidence in other persons to afford good illustrations of what was meant by faith in God. There was a certain man to whom a large amount of money was intrusted by his employer. The employer then went into a distant country. When he returned he found that the man to whom he had intrusted his money had doubled it for him during his absence. That servant is called faithful. He was a servant in whose reliability his master could repose perfect confidence. Paul was such a man. He was intrusted with the gospel to the Gentiles. God had confidence in his reliability. So also, confidence was reposed in Philip, Titus and others. Judging from these examples and from a multitude of others like them, faith is not merely a passive confidence that a certain person once lived and was what he professed to be ; but it is active confidence in the reliability of an individual who is personally known. Mere historical faith must precede real faith ; but it should not be mistaken for it. He who be-

believes that such a person as Jesus Christ once lived and taught according to the record of his life, is not necessarily a believer in the New Testament sense. This historical belief must become so personal as to control the believer's action, necessarily securing his regeneration. The devils believe, historically, and tremble; but Paul would not have Christians yoke up with any such believers. He called them unbelievers.

In the New Testament the particular object of faith is God. Faith is such confidence in the reliability of God as leads one to act according to his will. The following are the words of one who was competent to speak upon this subject: "Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8, 31-32. But faith is even more definite than this. It is confidence that Jesus is what he claimed to be. When the people saw him healing the sick, casting out demons, and performing all his wonderful and beneficent works, they believed on him. What that meant is easily understood by noticing that those who believed brought their

friends to him for healing, and crowded his path to be with him. They had confidence that he was the Messiah. "She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world." John 11, 27. They believed that he and the Father were one. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" John 14, 10. New Testament faith involves confidence in the deity of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the temper of this confidence is such that obedience to the teaching of Jesus accompanies it.

Or, this confidence may be exercised toward a thing. Men may believe a report. Thomas refused to believe the report that Jesus had risen from the dead. Mary believed the word of the angel of the Lord. Many believed the words that Jesus spoke. Later many believed the Gospel as a whole.

Faith, in all these cases, is found to be simply confidence in the reliability of some person or thing. In some countries gathering the eggs of sea-fowl furnishes occupation to a portion of those who dwell upon the coast. These sea-fowl deposit their eggs upon the shelving rocks that overhang the sea. In many cases the eggs

cannot be secured except by descending over the top of the cliff. A noose for the feet is made in the end of a rope, a basket is taken upon the arm, the hands grasp the rope above, and the men who hold the rope let the adventurer over the edge of the cliff. Hundreds of feet below are the crags that the angry waves are washing night and day. The man finds himself hanging, swinging, turning in mid-air. Dizziness, faintness, trembling, all unite to precipitate him onto the rocks below. Fear overcomes him. As he swings past a projecting rock he clutches it wildly ! The rope continues slowly to descend—the noose loosens from his feet—his whole weight hangs upon his fingers—one by one they slip from the crumbling edge. Ah ! that man ought to have exercised confidence in the rope ; it could easily have sustained a hundred times his weight. He ought to have had confidence in the men who in all their long experience had never let a rope slip through their fingers. Had he done so, instead of meeting an untimely death he would soon have learned to swing far out over the waters and far in under the shelving rocks where his treasure lay, with a shout of triumph and with a sense of keen enjoyment.

As in the exercise of confidence in the reliability of a reliable person or thing faith grows, we are led to consider next that there are different degrees of faith. This is manifest from the New Testament. Faith grows. "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." Luke 17, 5. "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly." II Thes. 1, 3.

Faith has its origin with God. Jesus is its "author and perfecter," and the resurrection of Jesus and the power of God are its basis. After a doubting Thomas has seen the print of the nails and the wound of the spear, he can believe anything. The apostles were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. Paul says that if he did not rise, their faith was vain, and their preaching vain. So our faith must rest upon the power of God as witnessed in the resurrection of Jesus rather than in any human power or knowledge. But even then faith is sometimes weak. That it may become stronger it is often tested. If it bears the test it grows.

The relation of faith to certain other things helps us better to understand what faith is.

The relation between faith and sin, for example, is antagonistic. The Christian should therefore bring everything he does to the test of his faith. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. 14, 23.

Faith is also related to the Gospel as a key to its lock. The Gospel can not be understood except by faith, for faith is the basis of the whole Gospel plan. So we find the Gospel called "The Faith." "But Elymas the sorcerer . . . withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith." Acts 13, 8. "Try your own selves, whether ye be in the faith." II Cor. 13, 5; and elsewhere.

Faith is also vitally related to love. It appears that such a thing as faith holding one off from the world in careless indifference concerning its salvation, and in self-satisfaction, is not possible. As love is the basis of the Gospel, and as faith is the basis or key of the Gospel, there must be a very close relation between them. Faith is useless without love. "And if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." I Cor. 13, 2.

It is important also to notice the relation

that faith sustains to righteousness. This is Paul's theme more than any other. He was commissioned especially to the Gentiles. He was sent to save the Christian church from Judaism. The Jews were seeking to establish their righteousness by the deeds of the Law. Paul himself had tried to become righteous by obedience to the Law. When Jesus met him he gave this up, and learned that it is impossible for any man to become righteous in that way. But he found a righteousness that men may have by faith in Jesus Christ. This righteousness does not amount to perfection of life; but in the individual's faith God recognizes the right purpose of the heart, and he accepts this right purpose in place of the perfect righteousness that has not yet been attained, but into which the man of faith is growing. "For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." Rom. 4, 3. "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6, 29.

What does faith secure?

It secures the favor of God. "Through whom also we have had our access by faith into this

grace wherein we stand ; and let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. 5, 2. " And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." Heb. 11, 6.

This favor is manifest in the propitiation of God, the Father. This propitiation is effected by faith. " Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith." Rom. 3, 25. God is certainly offended by sin. His favor can not be obtained until his holiness is satisfied. Provision for this satisfaction has been made in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It now remains for men to exercise faith in the appointed sacrifice ; and then, and not before, the sacrifice propitiates God toward the individual. The propitiatory sacrifice is sufficient to secure the favor of God to all ; but the sacrifice becomes effective, and his favor is actually secured by personal faith.

This favor is farther manifest in the sinner's immediate and complete justification. " And by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13, 39. " We believed on Christ Jesus, that we might

be justified by faith in Christ." Gal. 1, 16. God not only forgives, he looks upon the man's faith and by virtue of it pronounces him free from the condemnation of the Law. This is justification. God grants his full favor when faith is manifest in the complete surrender of the will. Then God adopts the man and never neglects or depreciates him. Indeed he does not deal with men parsimoniously; faith secures more than his favor, it makes certain his love. "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father." John 16, 27.

Faith also secures the favor of Jesus. He commended those who had faith. "Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" John 11, 40. He condemned those who did not have faith. "And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me." John 16, 8.

And faith likewise secures the favor of the Holy Spirit. "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive." John 7, 39.

Faith in securing the favor of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has secured salvation. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Eph. 2, 8. This salvation is variously represented. It is a condition of the heart. "And he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith." Acts 15, 19.

It is forgiveness of sin. "To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10, 43.

And it is righteousness. "For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith." Rom. 1, 17.

Besides the favor of God and salvation, faith secures blessings of a temporal nature. Jesus performed acts of physical healing in response to faith. See Mat. 8, 13. 9, 20-29. Mark 5, 34. Luke 8, 48; and elsewhere. The disciples also performed such acts of healing in the name of Jesus. "Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's

womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God." Acts 3, 1-8. See also 14, 9. Gal. 3, 5. Jas. 5, 15; and elsewhere.

The question arises, Do these gifts continue among Christians at the present time? The question is variously answered by honest men. Some claim that faith can heal the sick; others claim that it can not; and still others claim that it has effect in connection with other means. So far as the teaching of the New Testament is concerned there do not seem to be any references sufficiently general to war-

rant the supposition that the special gifts of healing granted to the early churches are continued. Moreover, the history and the purpose of miracles go to establish the same conclusion. The history of miracles shows that they began to disappear at a very early age. But if this is attributed to decadence in spiritual power, we must consider the fact that Jesus never performed a miracle without a sufficient purpose. The necessity for miracles is probably past. In this age other proofs of divine authority are more efficient. The question now is, Are the New Testament records reliable history? If so, the miracles recorded there suffice for all time. As a rule, those Christians who have the most intelligent faith in the Bible believe that miracles at the present time are not necessary to the Christian's greatest good. To be continually praying God to perform some miracle is to show lack of faith in his providence. Since Paul's experience with his thorn in the flesh we ought to know that thorns as well as roses are for our good. Was not the mitigation of human suffering that resulted from Christ's miracles mainly incidental to his greater purpose? Did not Christ bear our sicknesses for the purpose of

proving his deity rather than for the purpose of assuaging a little human pain? Jesus saves us from sin in and through our suffering; not from it. But if any think they see the need of miracles, and have faith to pray for them, either continuously or on special occasions, let them pray; and if they are not mistaken about the need God will grant the request.

But all doubt vanishes when we come to the special blessings of a spiritual nature that are secured by faith. These belong to all, for all time. One of these blessings is obedience. "Through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake." Rom. 1, 5. "Made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith." 16, 26.

Other blessings are joy and peace. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Rom. 15, 13.

Faith also secures comfort. "That is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith." Rom. 1, 12.

Faith secures Christian growth. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith." Jude, 20.

Faith secures the indwelling Christ. "That

Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Eph. 3, 17.

And faith secures the resurrection from the dead. "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6, 40.

One thing is certain, physical results will follow such a triumphant spiritual condition as this. Many a bed-ridden sufferer will be made well; many a burned-out physical organism will be revived. This will sufficiently account for a great many cures.

What does faith do?

Faith works. "I will that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they which have believed God may be careful to maintain good works." Titus 3, 8. See James 2, 17-20. Possibly some things can be secured by faith without works; but the attitude of true faith is that of confident joyful effort for the accomplishment of the object of faith. The idler lacks faith of a definite, pointed and positive character.

Faith makes profitable the preaching of the Gospel. "For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the

word of hearing did not profit them, because they were not united by faith with them that heard." Heb. 4, 2.

Faith also triumphs over the world. By faith the soul sees God, and by faith the soul loves God and endures as seeing him who is invisible. "For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." 1 John 5, 4. See Heb. 11, 27, seq.

When the nature of faith is understood, when the blessings that it secures to him who exercises it are known, and when the triumphs of faith are realized, the question usually follows, How can faith be secured?

It may be secured by testimony. The testimony of men inspires faith. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?" Rom. 10, 14. See also John 1, 7. 20, 30-31. "Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. . . . Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly. . . . So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ? They went out of the city, and were coming to him. . . . And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the woman, who testified, He told me all things that ever I did." John 4, 6-7, 16-18, 28-30, 39. If the wicked woman of Samaria could give testimony concerning Jesus that led many to exercise faith in him, who may not give such testimony? This testimony of personal experience often does more to establish faith on the part of others than do books or sermons. There is also the testimony of the Bible, which records the testimony of the patriarchs and of the prophets and of the apostles concerning Jesus whose words inspired faith when they were spoken; and they inspire faith now. "But many of them that heard the word believed." Acts 4, 4.

And there is the testimony of miracles.

Miracles were necessary to the establishment of the claims of Jesus. The historical truth of New Testament miracles being granted, there is no reasonable escape from faith in Jesus Christ. These miracles which were conclusive proof when they were performed are equally conclusive now. "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me." John 10, 25. See 37-38. 6, 30. 7, 31.

And again there is the testimony of foretold events. "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe." John 14, 29. One may certainly have faith if he will look up the testimony. It can be found in personal experience, in the words of Jesus, in his miracles, and in the fulfilment of predicted events.

Truth also inspires faith. Christian faith is established in truth. Men may not at once recognize the truth, they may miss it forever; but when the truth is recognized it inspires faith. "But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" John 8, 45-46.

Faith is farther secured by seeking the glory of God. "How can ye believe, which

receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" John 5, 44. Men may so dazzle their eyes with their own glory and pride that they will fail to see the glory of God and to humble themselves before it; but let men seek the glory of God and faith will not be wanting.

And faith is still further secured by sight. "Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, which came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed." John 20, 8. "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." 29. As one lost in the fog of early morning rejoices more and more as he sees, one after another, the familiar objects that assure him that he is in the right path at last, so the little faith that enables one to begin the Christian life, rewarded by experience, gives greater faith to make greater dependence upon God, until the soul rests satisfied that the way of life is found.

Finally, all men ought to have faith in God.

Men ought to exercise faith in God for their own sakes. No one has a right to cast his soul away. No man in his right mind commits suicide of the soul. "He that believeth and is

baptized shall be saved ; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Mark 16, 16. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins : for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John 8, 24.

Men owe it to God to have faith. He earnestly desires it. "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God." Mark 11, 22. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat : but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22, 31-32.

Can any one refuse to have confidence in the reliability of Jesus Christ, and in the truth that he reveals? Can any one lack desire for faith, since it secures the favor of God, salvation, obedience, joy, peace, comfort, growth in grace, the indwelling Christ, and the resurrection from the dead? Who would not have the faith that works with tireless energy along the highways of God's providence? Surely all men would desire faith if they knew about it. And those who desire it may find it by reviewing the testimony, which amply proves that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

CHAPTER VI.

THE IDENTITY OF MISSIONS AND CHRISTIANITY.

What is all this missionary work of which we hear so much, and what is the use of it? I became a Christian and joined the church, supposing that was the end of it; and now I find myself expected not simply to be an ordinary Christian, but to open my heart and my pocket-book to missions—as many of them as there were demons in the herd of swine. Is not Christianity sufficient to save one without the missionary attachment? To such a question one is tempted to answer: Why, sir, missions is Christianity in action! But as so many seem not to realize that there is no such thing as Christianity not in action, it would be unsafe to risk a sarcasm so liable to be unnoticed. No, the answer must be given plainly and soberly: Missions and Christianity are one and the same thing. Every Christian, in just so far as he is a Christian, is a missionary.

In the hope that this book may fall into the hand of some Christian who is willing to see

what truth there is in the statement made above, this chapter is given to showing the identity of missions and Christianity.

This identity is seen in the identity of their object.

The object of missions is to save from sin a world that, for the most part, does not care particularly about being saved—to take the liquor from the man who wants to drink it—to persuade the soul who wants to be vile to be pure—to teach the soul who loves himself to love another—to preach salvation from all sin—to preach a God who had rather pardon than punish—and to do this not alone by word of mouth ; but also to preach by the life. What the missionary teaches, he must also practise. If he says “ love your enemies,” he must love his. The object of missions is, by word and life, to teach salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

But this is also the object of Christianity. Jesus himself states this directly. “ Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” Mat. 18, 14. “ For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19, 10. “ The thief cometh not, but that

he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." John 10, 10. The theme of the Saviour's preaching was salvation wrought by faith and love. His life enforced his teaching. If he said, "love your enemies," he died for his. His preaching, his life and his death agree in declaring that the sole object in his coming, the sole object of Christianity, was the rescue of men from sin. Thus it is evident that in their object, at least, missions and Christianity are one.

The identity of missions and Christianity is seen, also, in the identity of their plans for the accomplishment of their object.

The first part of the plan of missions is to send out messengers to proclaim the Gospel. Upon the principle that men cannot hear without a preacher, and that if men go to preach they must be sent under such circumstances that they can give their time, without suffering for want of the necessities of life, to the work of proclaiming the Gospel, the Christian people of all lands unite in their various missionary societies to send men, who are first called of God and qualified, that they may go forth to preach the Gospel to those who otherwise cannot hear it.

These men must be provided with a message that they so thoroughly understand and that is in itself of so exalted a nature as to make these missionaries vastly superior, religiously at least, to those to whom they are sent. And yet it is not primarily the missionary that is sent, but his message. This message is the Gospel of the Son of God.

The message must be carried by feet that are "beautiful upon the mountains" to the regions where heathen temples glitter in the sun with a lustre equaled only by the darkness that thickens over their shrines. From homes of Christian culture and of love, and from schools of Christian learning, the noblest of the world must go, carrying to those who live in the blackness and darkness of apostacy from God the only message that can make the world noble. This is a long, hard journey, compared with which the crossing of seas and of deserts is as nothing.

But this is exactly the plan of Christianity. God sent his Son into the world. The very first act in the whole drama of the Gospel is an act of sending forth some one on an errand of love and mercy. Jesus was the Sent of God. We use the Latin word in our name mis-

sionary. It corresponds to the Greek apostle. Either term can be applied to Jesus with equal propriety. He was the Sent of God, and he was so called by Latin writers in the early centuries of the Christian era. Arnobius Afer (A. D. 295) speaks of Jesus by this very name, "Missus"—the past participle of the Latin verb to send—the Sent. So also Isidorus Hispalensis (A. D. 636) calls him the "Missus"—the Sent. Jesus was God's missionary or apostle. Of this the churches have had no doubt. But for some unaccountable reason, for years the churches and Christians seem to have overlooked this text: "As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world." John 17, 18.

Jesus was sent forth on a mission. He was sent from Heaven, a state of being infinitely above that of mortals, in order that he might save them. If he had come merely as a man from among men, then Christianity would have been no greater in its uplifting power than is philosophy. Then Christianity would have had no more power to save the fallen than has morality apart from Christianity. The power that lifts up can not lift its burden higher than itself. Jesus was sent from Heaven. He can lift up to Heaven.

He was sent to Earth. This was a long way, if we consider the moral distance, and the long stretch between perfect rest of soul and the turmoil of this human life. It was a long way, if we consider the Saviour's necessity, because of our inability to hold converse with a spirit, to become mortal and susceptible to human disease and temptation. The distance that Jesus traveled in this sense will never be known to men. This, then, is the plan of Christianity. The best inhabitant of Heaven sent to whisper in the ear of man.

Thus we find that missions and Christianity are the same. The plan of missions simply carries out the plan of Christianity. Christianity brought Jesus from Heaven to Earth ; and missions take him to all parts of the Earth.

This leads us to the second part of the plan of missions, which is to accomplish the first part of the plan and to perpetuate the plan by asking every Christian to feel that in becoming a Christian he becomes personally responsible, in a degree corresponding to his ability, for the salvation of the whole world. All the appeals of missions for men and for money are made upon this basis. The teach-

ing of missions upon this part of the plan can not be told except by telling the teaching of Christianity, they are so wholly the same. So, rather than state this part of the plan twice, we pass to consider it as the second part of the plan of Christianity.

Jesus was sent to evangelize the world; but during his earthly life he did not complete this work. He came to acquaint men with God and to show the true nature and purpose of God, raising up witnesses to what he was and to what he taught, by means of whom he purposed to carry forward and at last to complete this work of evangelization. This the churches for ages did not fully realize. The day of neglected missionary activity is always the dark age of the churches, as the dark age of every Christian is the time before he hears the ringing cry of the Gospel: "Go ye." Had not Jesus made provision for the continued existence and spread of his Gospel it had soon become a thing of the past.

Jesus, however, did make provision, in the nature of the Gospel itself, as well as by positive instruction, for this very thing. In the hearts of those who understood the spirit of the Gospel of their Saviour, the words "Go ye"

were burning before the Saviour spoke them. But even they did not know what course of action to pursue. The Saviour told them to tarry in Jerusalem until the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit came and these disciples felt themselves transformed into apostles. They had been learners of Jesus, doing some preaching and some healing; but now the burden of the perpetuation of the Gospel of the Son of God was laid upon them by the command of Jesus; and under the guidance of the Spirit they began to speak with tongues. Had they failed to do this the Gospel had not gone out through Asia and over into Macedonia and even down to Rome. The apostles went and preached; but that was not enough.

When death overtook them had there not been others ready to preach and to teach we would have been to-day in the darkness of heathenism. Here is the fundamental idea of Christianity. A Saviour sent from Heaven to Earth to show the way from Earth to Heaven to a few who are commissioned to show it to others. And every man who receives the message of salvation receives with it, as a part of it, the commission to tell the message to others. He who has received the message, but who has

not received the accompanying commission to pass it on, has received it in so half-hearted a manner as to make it doubtful if it ever does him any good. The reason for this assertion will appear a little later. Clearly missions are doing just what Christianity planned and commanded to be done. Christianity and missions are one in purpose and in plan.

The identity of missions and Christianity is farther seen in the identity of their spirit.

The spirit of missions is love. This can not be doubted in the face of the history of missions. Not to mention the spirit that has been the motive in all the great movements toward evangelizing the world in earlier days, let us call to mind the spirit that roused the present interest in modern missions. It was a mighty love for men that burned in the heart of Samuel J. Mills as he walked and pondered and prayed in his rambles through the country about Williams' College. It was this love that moved him, with the companions whom he chose, to retire daily to the shelter of a neighboring hay-stack to pray God to prepare a way by which the Gospel might be carried to the heathen. In this spirit were modern missions born.

It was the same spirit that burned in Carey's heart while he worked away at his cobbling. But when the genuine Christian love once secures a place in the heart it soon begins to manifest itself. Be he cobbler or priest who has felt the fire of the love that is akin to that of Jesus, he begins to plead with Christian people to help save those who live in the cold, unwarmed by a Saviour's love; who live in the darkness outside the circle of this glowing fire-light. So Carey began to exhort; then to preach; then he went to India; then he went to Heaven where he now beholds the Saviour whose love so burned in his soul.

It was this spirit that fired the great Judson and that made him strong to suffer. How like the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem is the following cry of Judson and his few fellow-missionaries over Ava. This cry was sent across the great waters in a plea to Christians in America for more missionaries. "Of all the places that now cry around us, we think that Kyouk Phyoo cries the loudest. No; we listen again, and the shrill cry of golden Ava rises above them all. O Ava! Ava! with thy metropolitan walls and gilded turrets, thou sittest a lady among these eastern nations;

but our hearts bleed for thee! In thee is no Christian church, no missionary of the cross." (Memoir of Judson, Wayland, p. 53.) But Judson himself was there later, in prison for Ava's sake.

It was this spirit in the heart of Judson's wife, Ann Hasseltine, that made her anxious to return from her visit to America to her home of suffering among the heathen, and to her ultimate death from this suffering. Her biographer gives us a glimpse of her spirit in the following words: "Several were added to the little mission church, greatly rejoicing the heart of Mrs. Judson in America, who was 'well acquainted with the name of every one,' and causing her to be impatient to start back." She soon went back—back to the horrors of Oung-pen-la, that no one can ever fully realize—back to succor her husband in his terrible sickness and imprisonment; and then a little later, with no white face near her—save that of her baby Maria, upon whom death had already put its mark—to die with this sad, low plaint upon her lips: "The new missionaries are long in coming, I must die alone and leave my little one." Of her Dr. Edward Judson says: "The hands so full of holy endeavors

were destined to be suddenly folded for rest. She died apart from him to whom she had given her heart in her girlhood, whose footsteps she had faithfully followed for fourteen years, over land and sea, through trackless jungles and strange, crowded cities, sharing his studies and privations, illumining his hours of gloom with her beaming presence, and with a heroism and fidelity unparalleled in the annals of missions, soothing the sufferings of his imprisonment. He whom she had thus loved, and who, from his experience of Indian fever, might have been able to avert the fatal stroke, was far away in Ava. No missionary was with her when she died, to speak words of Christian consolation. The Burman converts, like children, gathered helplessly and broken-heartedly about their white mamma. The hands of strangers smoothed her dying pillow, and their ears received her last faint, wandering utterances. Under such auspices as these her white-winged spirit took its flight to the brighter scenes of the New Jerusalem." The significance of these sufferings, much multiplied unto death, lies in the fact that she gave herself to them consciously, willing to undergo them for the sake of giving the light

of the Gospel to those whose souls were abiding "in darkness and in the shadow of death."

But this is only a grand illustration of the Christian spirit. The missionary or Christian plan is not to be carried out by means of authoritative commands; but by means of the nature of the thing itself. Christianity is love-begotten, for "God is love." 1 John 4, 8. God sent his Son. We are told why he sent him. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3, 16. This is the key-note of the Gospel. The second tone of the harmony is the love of him whom God sent. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15, 12-13. Here also is a third tone. "Love one another, even as I have loved you." And in this prayer of prayers, Jesus again returns to the key-note, completing the full chord in these words: "I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them." John 17, 26.

This Love of God for Jesus and for men, in

Jesus and in men, causing love to abound in all hearts where it enters, for God and for Jesus and for all men, is not a passion ; it does not look for love in return, nor for any selfish end. This love is not defined by our natural love for one another. It is not a passion, it is a principle.

Love recognizes the goodness of God and it turns toward him as the flower turns toward the sun. It recognizes the right of God to his sovereignty and, bending sweetly in sorrow, singing praises in joy, it acquiesces in his will.

It recognizes the possibilities of men. Not of the good and of the great only, but of the wicked and of the lowly also. The wicked might have been good. The good but just escaped being wicked. Love sees that all men are capable of great wickedness. It knows well, what we will not often admit to ourselves, that in every soul there is the possibility, even the danger, of awful sin. How a soul can hate ! and how dark are the crimes that follow in the trail of hatred ! What capacity for crime ; and what capacity for suffering the woe that crime begets ! Love sees it all, and love would spare the soul—whose soul it matters

not. If there is a soul in danger, love would rescue it, not counting the cost. Love sees the woe of the lost soul. And beside this, love knows that every soul has also a marvelous capacity for good. He who loves knows how large a soul may become. He knows that all low aims and base desires are killed by the love of God in the heart. He knows that the soul is capable of a knowledge and of an enjoyment as great as is the suffering of which it is capable. To him who loves it is not only the soul in its woe that appears; but it is the angel become a devil. A ruined soul is not that merely. Love sees, in contrast, the golden city where this soul might have had its home.

It is impossible that God could love men and not do the very best thing for them. Jesus could not do otherwise than suffer for men when he was moved by so mighty a love. So men who become possessed of this same love must be actively engaged for the glory of God who is the primary object of the love; and, immediately, for the salvation of men; both because this is God's will and because the same love that moved God to send his Son and that made Jesus come, also impels these men to tireless activity always for the salvation of men everywhere.

This is the true spirit of Christianity. This is the spirit that prompted Jesus. In apparent surprise at the dulness of the human understanding of his mission he said: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business." Luke 2, 49. So also says the Christian. For this reason we said, a little while ago, that he who supposes he is a Christian, but who has not received the accompanying commission to tell all the world of Jesus, is so half-hearted in his Christianity as to make it very doubtful whether it ever does him any good. Can one be a Christian and still be destitute of the fundamental principle of Christianity? Perhaps many professing Christians have some of this great love hid away somewhere. Many will be "saved so as by fire." God pity them! But the Christian is a missionary in so far as he is a Christian.

The identity of missions and Christianity is seen also in the identity of their fields.

The mission field is the world. It is not the doctrine of missions that a Christian should be a foreign missionary to the exclusion of all other missionary enterprises. In fact the foreign missionary makes the foreign mission station his home and to him the work comes

to be work for neighbors. He can not work for a neighbor at a distance, so it comes to be work for the person at his side, within reach of his voice. This spirit that recognizes the world as the field of Christian activity knows well that where the Christian is there his vocal words must be spoken, and there his most direct work must be done. The true missionary, wherever he is, will seek to save the soul who is nearest at hand; but he will pray for all men everywhere as he loves all; and he will give for all as he is able. The true missionary is moved by the love of men to seek their salvation in their homes, in their places of business, in their churches, not only; but his love will take in the interests of state missions. He will be anxious to help care for the souls of those who are inhabitants of North America—the great home mission field—so called. And he will never say, I have no time or care for the heathen abroad, there are heathen enough here.

Now this field of missionary activity is also the field of Christian activity. Did not Jesus say: "Go ye into all the world"? Mark 16, 15. This great mission upon which he sent his disciples forth could not be fulfilled at once, not

even during their lives, for the world—all the world—means everywhere, always. The disciples would die before they had preached to all the world; therefore they must pass along, together with the Gospel, the commission to tell it to others. That this was the Saviour's intention is evident from his prayer. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word." John 17, 20. Jesus lifts the veil from the future. He points to the long line of men and of women who have made up the number of those who believe on him through the word of those who have heard and who have spoken. He pointed to us and to our posterity to the end of the age and prayed for us. He saw the dark regions of the heathen and he knew that the blood of the faithful would be the seed of the Gospel there. Pointing to the Indian learning to pray, he prayed for him. He saw under the lifted curtain the darkness of Africa, and Livingstone breaking through the jungle. He saw China's millions. He saw Japan. He saw the trooping children of our own great land, pouring over its western borders, scattering in little bands and then gathering in little groups of two and three, carrying in their

hearts the echoes of the prayers of the mothers of the East: and seeing them, he prayed for them. Under that lifted veil he looked into secret corners where the Christian's foot has not yet stepped, and pointing there he prayed for those who have never yet seen the light in a Christian's eye; the prayer to take effect when they have believed on him through some Christian's word. Go there in person or by your money for the purpose of bringing these within the range of that prayer. God's blessing in answer to the Saviour's prayer hangs within reach, suspended over every human being to the end, ready to descend when the conditions of the prayer are met. These conditions are that some one tell the blessing of salvation to him who has never heard of Jesus; and that he believe on Jesus through their word.

The apostles understood that the field was the world. They began at Jerusalem and preached everywhere; some still in Jerusalem, some in neighboring towns, some in Cappadocia and Asia, some in Macedonia, even to Rome. And they did not stop going because they thought that they had reached the limit of their commission, but because they reached their graves.

In the light of the New Testament it is hard to understand how any Christian can be content to love less than the whole world. Indeed the right kind of love is love for a soul because it is a soul without regard to where it is.

If these things are true, the Christian is a missionary in everything except vocation. Occasionally some Christian is moved to go abroad to work in a distant community for the salvation of men. We call him a missionary. Very well. Only let it be understood that in changing his vocation to that of preaching to the heathen he has not changed the man, nor has he made himself different from other Christians. He is under no greater obligation to love men everywhere than is every Christian. He is not more constrained or more inspired by the spirit of the Gospel to do this than is every Christian, except that he may be a better Christian.

The world's redemption is as much upon your shoulders as upon mine, and it is as much upon my shoulders as upon any missionary's. If I shirk, that is my shame. If he is faithful, that is his glory in Christ. So then the Christian in the counting house and the Christian at the plow, who are equally possessed by the divine love for men, are equally

missionaries. The merchant, the pastor, the laborer and the missionary, if they are equally possessed by Christian love, are equal as Christians and as missionaries. The man at the plow is just as much commissioned of God to save the world as is the man who goes to preach to the heathen. That he must work in a different way is a matter of course; but that does not affect the fact that every Christian has on him the glorious burden of the world's redemption.

This conclusion follows immediately from the fact that the Christian, if he is a Christian, by virtue of his relation to Christ, is one of the great company to whom Christ said, "Go ye into all the world," and for whom he prayed that those who believed through the Christian's word might be blessed. By virtue of this relation to Christ and by virtue of his connection with the great self-perpetuating institution of Christianity in the world, every Christian is first and pre-eminently a missionary. He may be a farmer-missionary, or a mechanic-missionary, or a minister-missionary, or a missionary-missionary. Whatever may be his specific name, indicating in what kind of labor he spends his life, his generic name is missionary as surely as it is Christian.

The same conclusion is reached and is assured when we consider that the Christian is a Christian only because he has come to be controlled by the spirit of Jesus—the spirit that yearns for the lost as the mother yearns for her sinning boy or weeps over her ruined girl. He does not yet know much of Christ, who does not know this burden for the souls of men. It is because of this essentially missionary spirit of Christianity that the Christian, as soon as he has received the Saviour for himself, turns to his brother, to his sister, or to some one near and says: Oh, my friend, the Saviour's love is precious. Will not you accept it?

This loving spirit will not suffer the restraint that its body is compelled to bear. Heaven can not contain it when the cry of the lost comes up to the gate; but it bursts forth to Earth and Jesus is found calling to repentance the children of men. This spirit, if it is in the heart of man, can not be confined to his heart; it will burst forth and be felt in healing power somewhere. And where it does not matter. Only so that its whole and ever increasing energy may be expended on the suffering objects of its love.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE.

“ It is more blessed to give than to receive.” God has encouraged men to live philanthropic lives by making self-forgetfulness the secret of true happiness. He goes on his way with the lightest heart who has denied himself for another’s sake. The following story is told of Alexander Jean Boucher, the great French violinist. There is at Vienna a beautiful wood six miles long. It is a public pleasure ground. At a certain festival once held there an old soldier, lame, ragged and destitute took his stand in the shade of a large tree near a much frequented thoroughfare. He brought forth his old violin and tuned it as best his deaf ears would permit. He made his lean dog sit up and hold the hat in his mouth to catch, God willing, a kreützer or two from some whose hearts might be moved by the festivities of the day and by his needy condition to give him a pittance. The morning passed and no one had noticed him, no one had stopped to listen to

the plaintive tone of his ill-tuned violin. The noon passed and the old man began to grow weary and faint ; but still he stood on, though his old limbs shook ; and still he played on, though his old hands trembled. At last, late in the afternoon, he could hold out no longer. He sat down on a stone near by, and, sick and faint of body and of heart, he rested his gray head in his hands and a falling tear glistened for a moment in the failing sunlight.

In his sorrow he had not noticed a fashionably dressed man who had been standing for some moments behind the trunk of the tree under which he had spent his sad day. This stranger was moved by the poor man's condition, and now he stepped before him. As he dropped a piece of gold into the empty hat he said : " Lend me your violin for a little while." He took it from the trembling hand, and touched it lightly with the old bow. It was not a very inferior instrument. He carefully tuned it until its tone was clear and sweet. The old soldier wondered what had taken possession of his old fiddle. The stranger said : " You hold the hat while I play." Then there floated out from beneath the tree—out on the breath of the evening—such celestial strains

of music as Alexander Jean Boucher knew so well how to call forth from the violin. The passing crowd paused; a hush fell over the multitude far around. Then a murmur and a sudden movement toward the tree began. The meaning of the scene broke upon the people. The old man's hat was filled. The violinist struck forth on the national air and played with enthusiasm. The people applauded and shouted. The stranger laid the violin in the old man's hand and was gone—gone with a heart happier than the one he had left beating so fast under the old soldier's coat.

And the multitude that helped to make the old man rich was happy too. No doubt individual men told the story that night at their firesides, and felt glad that they had given their gold pieces for the old man's comfort. But in the morning—it is just possible that in the morning some man put his hand into his trousers' pocket and started, exclaiming, "Why!" Then remembering, "Oh." Then, after musing a moment, "I was a fool to be so moved by a little music." Something is wrong here, or this man would not regret that he gave his money the day before.

His case, however, is a specimen of that of many a Christian who has been moved by

some unusual circumstance to give for Christian work what he has afterward regretted. Thus he has lost the permanent blessing that might have attended his gift; and the churches have lost the help of his benefactions.

There ought to be method in Christian beneficence.

See the advantages of method.

One of the most important is the prevention of waste. The Christian who has been wrought upon by some moving appeal will give more, under the pressure of that moment of excitement, than the average benevolence of his Christian life will sustain. There is a point of feeling beyond which Christians should not be urged to any unusual action. This point is not much beyond the average of the Christian's life—the point to which his spirit frequently comes while he is engaged in the trials of his home and of his daily work. The true power of the Christian to sustain himself and to approve his own conduct must be judged from this common plane to which he most frequently rises from his worst moods, and to which he habitually descends from his best moods. It is evident that if, in the excitement of some strong appeal that has lifted him

above his level, the Christian has been led to commit himself to a very unusual amount of personal Christian activity, or to give much more than usual, when he descends to the level of his Christian life he will regret his action and will feel that a personal injury has been done him. In proportion as his feeling has surged higher than his level will he feel indignant, and he may even accuse the person who moved him of having robbed him. And perhaps he does so with some reason. The low level of this Christian's life is not to be commended; but if he has been carried out of himself, whether by a strong appeal or by a drug, and has been induced to give in that state of mind, he has been robbed. He will not be caught again. When next he is present where such an appeal is made he will not be moved. He will smile and frown and say: "You caught me with that trick once; shame on you. If you do it again, shame on me." Here is waste. If this man had been induced to give an amount that the level of his Christian life would have commended him for giving, he would have given again, and might have been won to habitual giving. As it is, his work or his money is lost to the churches in

the future, and he himself is deprived of this means of Christian growth.

Moreover, the Christian who gives from impulse will be guilty of waste in that he will often be moved to give to causes that are not the most worthy. Many worthy causes are not the most worthy; and the Christian's money is not his own, but God's. He is not at liberty to give it for merely moral objects. His money as well as his heart, himself and his time is always pledged to the work of Christianization; not merely to the work of morality or of general charity. There is hardly a greater curse than the liquor traffic. But temperance organizations that have for their end the reclamation of the inebriate, but not his conversion, while they are good so far as they go, are yet not worthy of Christian support. For the man's soul is still lost, after he has been reclaimed from the gutter, as surely as before. If there were an overplus of money in the Christian treasury, the case would be different; but distinctively Christian work is suffering for the want of money. The Christian who is giving methodically and through the regular channels of Christian enterprise will not be tempted to throw away the Lord's

money on some reformatory scheme. Neither will he be carried away by the flashing eye and by the magnetic influence of some enthusiast, who is sure that he can usher in the Millennium at once, if only he can assure his enterprise. The Christian who is not already harnessed down to the same "old car of salvation" to the utmost of his present Christian strength, is just the one to sink the Lord's money in some such phantasmal scheme.

Method in Christian beneficence prevents waste, also, by saving the time of valuable workers. It requires the best worker in the church to raise money for the work of the church; and especially to raise money for missionary enterprises. It requires the best man that can be secured to go from church to church and from association to association to plead for money to carry on the work of the churches at large. And this man, pressed by the needs of the work, is the man who makes the obnoxious appeal and whom plucked Christians call "robber." This was probably one of the most efficient pastors in the state. He was a means of blessing to very many perishing men. The work he is doing as a special agent can be done better by the special agency of

methodical beneficence and he can go back to his pastorate, and can give his time to preaching the Gospel directly. So in the church. Let a habit of giving from principle take the place of church fairs and of money making schemes, and the "Aunt Betseys" of the ice cream freezer and of the money bag will be transformed into the angels of light who minister with open Bible to the ill of body or to the dead of soul.

Not only is waste prevented by method in Christian beneficence, but by it the final amount raised is greatly increased. Method enables us to give a little at a time. The advantages of this are recognized in other things in the installment plan. Why, if this plan enables men to accumulate homes at last, by saving a little often, should Christians not make use of it in their more important work? If the treasurer of the church asks a man for five hundred dollars for the support of the church, he may be startled; but if he asks for only ten dollars a week for a year, he can do that. This is more emphatically true in the case of the poorer, laboring class. The shop-girl who cannot give five dollars and twenty cents at one time without seriously in-

terfering with her living, can do it easily if she can have a year in which to save ten cents a week.

The final amount secured for the cause is farther increased by method, because this sort of giving increases the desire to give. There is a genuine pleasure in giving when one is not strained by it beyond the norm of his Christian grace. The redemption of the Christian from selfishness is, perhaps, the greatest part of his redemption. The characteristic of the Christian is love for God and for men resulting in self-forgetfulness. So the Christian, in proportion as he is a Christian, delights to give for the salvation of others. The more he experiences the refined pleasure resulting from this godlike expenditure of love, of self and of money for the greatest good of others, the higher becomes the norm of his life and the more he will give and the more will he delight to give.

Beside this, the feeling that one has a place in Christian work increases his desire to enlarge that place by larger expenditure. It is a joy to feel oneself leaned upon; and it makes one feel like becoming stronger and more helpful. This feeling soon develops in

the heart of the methodical giver. It is not he who complains that the church is not very social. He does not speak of the church as "they," but as "we." He soon feels that he is depended upon; and the church of which he is a member feels that it has another pillar. All this develops a desire to give more. And in this growth of Christian character is laid the intelligent foundation for larger giving. The level of character is coming up. Gifts are made upon principle, not upon impulse.

This Christian is informed concerning the needs of the world, and the basis of his giving is this need of the world rather than his own selfish enthusiasm. The appeal from Macedonia is ringing in his soul all the time. He has time to weigh it well; and with it still ringing, to sit down in sober earnest to count his Lord's money, and to decide how much shall go here and how much there. There is some reluctance manifest now and then; but it is when he feels bound to put some of the money, with which to carry on the Lord's business, back into the safe. He would like to give it all.

Another advantage of Christian beneficence is that it gives the churches a basis of operation.

The individual church whose members are methodical givers can estimate very exactly the amount of money and of effort at its disposal for the ensuing year. The income is not affected by any strong appeals from outside sources, for these Christians love to give and are giving all they can. They have directed their efforts toward a definite end, the very best end, and through the most economical channels; and that does away with any appeal and with any need of an appeal. If the good old pastor resigns or dies and some new and untried man takes his place, it makes no difference to these trained Christians. They do not give for love of a man, but for love of God and of men. And they still give on whether the old pastor lives and labors or not, whether the new man is eloquent or prosy, good or bad. They still give on whether they have a pastor or not. If they have no pastor for a time, there is a little over accumulation in the treasury, and some contribution of the church for Africa or for the Indians is increased. Or the poor deacon has a new coat, that is all. This church can become individually responsible for the support of a missionary; and the missionary can be sure of his living. But a church

of spasmodic givers can not do that work. The missionary would be left to die, when a few got out of the notion of giving.

So, also, the great missionary societies of our churches know what to depend upon for the coming year. If the income from the churches is steady and regular, the great enterprises of any denomination can be entered upon with confidence.

All these advantages, and others, result from method in Christian beneficence. The advantages are in proportion to the perfection of the method and to the degree of conformity to it. The ideal condition is hard to realize; but this fact should never keep an individual or a church from taking the first steps and then from pushing as fast as possible toward the full realization of the plan.

There could hardly be a better method than that which Paul commended to the Corinthian Christians.

In this plan he urges that EVERY CHRISTIAN SAVE. The emphasis here is upon EVERY. The wisdom of making the exhortation to all rather than to the few, is manifest to every one who knows that dimes make dollars. "Rome was not built in a day." The colos-

sal pillars and beautiful domes, the minarets and turrets of those grand edifices were years in process of construction. The very architecture of those buildings was not the conception of a day; but little by little through the succeeding generations of Greek and Roman culture it took form, perfecting a monument of architectural art that has been the admiration of all ages. The shores that surround the seas are made up of grains of sand; and the seas themselves are the aggregate of drops of water. The vast wealth of individual men is composed of dollars and cents; and it has been accumulated by adding one dollar to another. A hundred dollars for Christian work is just as much when secured by the small gifts of a hundred men as when given by one man. And it is of more value, because a hundred men are interested instead of one. The cause of Christianity is not suffering more for the lack of large gifts from wealthy men than it is for the lack of the small gifts of the great army of those who do not give anything because they can not give much. The world is full of stewards of God who hide the one talent because it is not five or ten. The Lord is displeased at this conduct. He commended

the widow who gave what she could, even though it was but a very little. He is not faithful to the Lord's trust who refuses to give a penny because it is so little. If it is all he can give justly, it is enough ; and it should be given.

But every Christian should give for his own sake. The joy of giving has already been mentioned, and also the fact that methodical beneficence is a source of Christian growth. This reflex benefit to the Christian may well be urged as a reason why every Christian should save for God's work.

While Paul's plan was proposed especially for Christians, and while it is every Christian whom he exhorts to save for the collection he is about to receive, yet Paul would not object to beginning a little farther back and to training the children to this work. Let this EVERY include the children. This habit formed in early life may help to bring the soul to Christ. The heart is where the treasure is. This little earthly treasure given in childhood, before the treasure of God's love is found, may lead some heart to follow after it in prayer and finally in penitence.

Going one step farther in Paul's method, we

have, let every Christian save, *ASIDE IN STORE*. Paul was coming before long to take their collection for the poor, and he wanted this money all ready when he came. Every church should have its regular times for receiving the offerings of its members for each special object in which the church is interested. The collection for incidental expenses—covering every kind of expense for carrying on the work of the home church—will probably be taken every Sunday. Then supposing the church is giving for six objects outside its own church work, let there be a stated time for taking each of these collections. These stated times for the various collections are Paul's "when I come."

Then let every Christian—and every Christian's child—have his place of deposit at home. Let it be a sacred place and a simple place. The place of secret prayer will best serve the purpose. Have there the Lord's purse or a simple box with a slot in the cover large enough to admit a silver dollar. This is the place "in store" where the money is to be saved, little by little, that is to help evangelize the world and to usher in the coming of the Lord. During the time between the offerings at the church, money will be deposited here;

and when the Sunday for the collection has come, there will be something in store. Here also can be saved such slips of missionary or of general Gospel intelligence as may be helpful to the neighbor who does not have so many advantages of Christian reading. These slips can be handed out judiciously and may be used by the Holy Spirit with most wonderful power.

We go one step farther in Paul's plan. Let every Christian save, aside in store, UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. The important thought here is regularity in giving. The time to save aside in store is when there is some income, and every time there is any income. This is very important. There will frequently be temptation not to do this. The Christian will need all the income of this week or of this month for some investment or to meet some payment, and he promises himself to make up the deficiency from the income next received; but as a matter of general experience he does not always make it up as he promises himself he will, and so he does not keep his obligation to God. Moreover, if the payment to the Lord's "place in store" is not made from the income of one period but is left to be made

from that of the next, the double payment required from the income of this second period will seem to be very large. The average level of the Christian's life is not high enough to sustain the gift of so much at one time, and he will be likely to feel afraid that he is doing too much. It is important that the stated amount be given regularly every time there is any income.

There are some decided advantages in making these deposits upon the First Day of the week. It is the day upon which Jesus completed his earthly mission by his resurrection. It is the day upon which the disciples as a people distinct from all other religionists, distinct even from the Jews, were accustomed to meet for worship among themselves. It was the day upon which they commemorated, in the Lord's Supper, their Saviour's death and resurrection. And it was the day upon which they were accustomed to lay aside offerings for the work of the churches. The associations of this sacred day helped to make the laying aside of their offerings a part of their worship. In the same way these associations will help us. If this day is spent as it should be spent by every Christian, the holy influences of the Word of God

and of prayer and of religious thought and emotion, will make these gifts consecrated offerings to God. They will be the human supplement of the prayers of the day for the coming of God's kingdom. Such prayers are answered. If one's income is not received weekly, let him visit this sacred place just the same, and pray.

We come to the last step in Paul's plan. Let every Christian save, aside in store, upon the First Day of the week, AS HE HAS PROSPERED. God never requires more of a person than he can do. To him to whom much has been given, of him will much be required; but to whom little has been given, of him but little will be required. With many Christians this matter is quickly disposed of by giving a certain part of a regular income. With others the income varies, and is of such a nature that it cannot be so easily estimated. Many give their proportion of their money income and let that suffice. But health is income. Continued life and thought and feeling are income. Some may be in danger of hearing the rebuke: "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money." Acts 8, 20. To the question, What

and how much shall we give? there can be but one answer. Give all of everything.

It is exceedingly unfortunate that we can not do better than to use the word "give," in this connection. The fact is, the Christian himself and what he has is not his own, but all has been bought with a high price. The Christian is nowhere represented as a householder, but as a steward. What he holds in his possession he does not own; he simply holds it in trust. He cannot give, either himself or the property that he holds. He must use it all as God has directed for the advancement of his kingdom on earth. If the Christian comes to feel that he is to be commended for bestowing of this property for the glory of God, so that the thought, I have given so much, comes to sound complacently and flatteringly to his soul, let him call to mind the Saviour's words: "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." Luke 17, 10. Let him search to see if by some strange confusion of the true ownership of things he has not lost sight of the "mine" and "thine," and to see if he has not had a purloiner's hand in his Master's money drawer.

"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." 1 Cor. 9, 9. He may eat what he needs. That is all. That is enough. The Christian is entitled to a frugal living, but he should not lay up treasure upon earth. He may, he must provide for his family. Not only for the needs of health; but for the emergencies of sickness and of old age. He must rear his children and help them to educate themselves. Beyond this all he has is God's. Even this is God's; but this much the Christian may safely use for his own support and for the support of his family.

We are bound now to consider how Paul's plan comports with great accumulation of property.

If Christians do accumulate property, it should be in business for the Lord. It may be an open question whether all one's income over what is necessary for a frugal living should be put aside, in store, each Lord's Day, and so be sent soon, directly out into the work of evangelization; or whether it, or a large part of it, should first be invested in a productive business where it can be made to increase rapidly, and so to furnish a large addition to the Christian's individual income. If that is an

open question, it certainly is not an open question as to whether the Christian should hold all this business as his or as God's. In this case he has gone into business in the name of God and for his sake. And every man must have enough capital to carry on this business successfully.

But is the other an open question? In what sort of coin would God prefer to have his property when he comes to reckon with his stewards? Perhaps in gold and in silver and in bonds and first mortgages; but probably he would rather have it in regenerate souls. Of course this is the coin of Heaven, and all this other coin must be exchanged for regenerate souls before it will pass there. The only question is: At the time of reckoning, will the money that I earn amount to the most, reckoned in souls saved, if I spend it as fast as I earn it; or will it amount to more if I keep and invest it, and turn it over and over through succeeding generations till the Lord come, and let him make the exchange then? When Christ comes will he be in need of vast wealth in the coin of this world to inaugurate and to carry on his work; or will he delay his coming until the Gospel has been preached to all nations?

Whether the world is to be converted before Christ comes or not, it is certainly first to have heard the Gospel. There is invested wealth enough in the hands of private Christians and in the hands of Christian societies to bring about the evangelization of the world soon. The Millennium might dawn speedily if every Christian would speak to some one who does not know of Christ; and if every Christian and every Christian society would use all that is left, over a frugal living, directly for purposes of evangelization. And why not? What will the capital be worth after its interest has finally, perhaps centuries later on, evangelized the world? And in the meantime what loss! Does the Christian world really desire the coming of the Saviour in his glorious reign; or will it feel all the easier to think he will not come in A. D. two thousand, but twenty thousand?

We pray "Thy kingdom come." If we mean it, let every Christian save. Several men were once raising a heavy piece of timber. They had it almost in its place, but lacked the push of a pound or two. They were nearly exhausted with lifting high and to the utmost of their strength. If the timber fell it would

injure many. Oh, for some one to lift one more pound ! A ten-year-old boy saw the situation. He rushed up the ladder under his father's quivering arm and gave a heave. The timber fell into its place. The shout that greeted the boy rings to-day in the ears of the weakest and poorest Christian saying, "Push your pound !" Let every Christian save, aside in store. Let the place of private prayer be the place of sacred deposit. Let every Christian save, aside in store, upon the First Day of the week. Let this day be one of prayer and of godly deeds, and let the holy influences of the day help to sanctify the gift and to wing it on its way to some soul. Let every Christian save, aside in store, upon the First Day of the week, as he has prospered. Let us not wait until interest shall at last suffice to evangelize the world ; but let us live frugally, and save all the rest aside to send, send soon, to those who wait for light, that their day close not in the darkness of death.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit, known as the Third Person of the God-head, is the present agency of God in the world. This is the age of the Spirit. We are living under the reign of the Spirit. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we should know all that we can know about him and about the work that he is doing in the world. There is only one reliable source of knowledge from which we can draw. We must be ever returning for all our knowledge of God to the revelation that he has made of himself in the Bible. We turn to the Bible to study the Spirit with reference to his being.

When we come to our study with the earnest question on our lips: Who is he? we find almost at once that the Holy Spirit is a person.

Jesus speaks of him, in John's Gospel, in such a way as to make it certain that the Lord considered the Holy Spirit to be as really a person as he was himself. He says: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another

Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth."—John 14, 16. In this place Jesus speaks of the Comforter, using the personal pronoun, he. He also speaks of this Comforter as coming to take his place, and to do his work. He was coming to comfort the disciples in their sorrow at the loss of Jesus, who had been their constant and appreciative friend. No mere influence could do this. Jesus had been a personal friend. Anything that could take his place and give real comfort for his loss must be also a dear personal friend.

A little farther along in the chapter Jesus says: "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." v. 26. The Holy Spirit was therefore to be a teacher. He is therefore a person. Taking the place of Jesus in the hearts of the disciples, he was to bring the things that Jesus taught continuously to their minds; and by means of his own unspoken comments he was to make the meaning of the Master's teaching more clearly known. This requires that the Spirit be a person.

Jesus still farther enlarges upon this work of the Spirit in these words: "I have yet

many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth : for he shall not speak from himself ; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak : and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me : for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." John 16, 12-14. The Spirit was to take up the work of instruction where Jesus laid it down, and to carry it forward. Taking up the Lord's sentence that was broken off by his death, the Spirit would finish it. All this makes it clear that the Spirit is as certainly a person as was Jesus.

Moreover, this person, the Holy Spirit, was to have a controlling power over the apostles. So much so that he would speak through them. Jesus says : "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." Mat. 10, 20. The same words of Jesus are recorded by Mark. "And when they lead you to judgment, and deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak : but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye : for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Mark 13, 11. The person-

ality of this Holy Spirit, therefore, must be very decided; and he must be very powerful so to control the personality of such men as the apostles were that they became simply his mouth-piece.

Just what or who this Comforter was to be, and how he was to come, and in what form he would appear, no doubt troubled the apostles more or less; but they seem never to have doubted his personality, either before or after Pentecost.

In reply to the question, Who is the Holy Spirit? we answer first, that which the form of the question implies; but that which, though so implied, is not always duly considered. The Holy Spirit is a person.

Farther investigation shows that the Holy Spirit begot Jesus. This fact is somewhat startling, at least when first received. But it is clearly stated by two of the evangelists. By Matthew it is stated in these words: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Mat. 1, 18. Then when Joseph was intending to put her away, an angel said to him: "That which is conceived

in her is of the Holy Ghost." v. 20. "The same thing is taught in Luke. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High." Luke 1, 32. Mary objected that she had no husband, to which the angel replied: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." v. 35. In these references it is clear that the Holy Ghost begot Jesus.

The question arises, Who then was the Father? Is the Father identical with the Holy Ghost? In one sense he is; and in another sense he is not. God is not three, but one. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God. But yet these three are represented as three distinct persons. Nevertheless, because of their unity in the one God, certain work of God seems sometimes to be attributed to one person of the Trinity and at other times to another person of the Trinity. And yet in certain particulars each person of the Trinity has a specific work. The conception of three persons in one person is always difficult to attain. It is perhaps impossible to understand how the Holy Spirit and the Father are the same person and

yet two persons. But there is much truth yet beyond our comprehension that is not contrary to reason.

It is interesting, with this fact, that the Holy Spirit begot Jesus, in mind, to read the accounts of the Lord's baptism in Matthew, Mark and Luke; and to ask whether the voice did not proceed from the Spirit that was seen to descend. And also to read the account of the transfiguration with the same question in mind.

The Holy Spirit is also the exalted and glorified Jesus.

This is clearly implied by the words of Jesus. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you." John 14, 16-18. Here in the same breath Jesus says that the Comforter shall come; and that he will not leave them comfortless, but that **HE** will come. Jesus seems thus to identify the Holy Spirit with himself as he would be after his resurrection.

This great truth was clearly understood by Paul who says : " Now the Lord is the Spirit. " II Cor. 3, 17. The context makes it plain that Paul is speaking of the Lord, Jesus ; and of the Holy Spirit. v. 18.

The conclusion is very evident, therefore, that the Spirit is the exalted and glorified Jesus. At the same time we must be guarded against supposing that the Holy Spirit began his existence in Jesus ; we know he did not, for he begot Jesus. And also we must not confuse the personal soul of the God-man, Christ Jesus, with the Spirit.

Indeed, the confusion in our minds does not begin to form into order until we are certain of the deity of the Holy Spirit.

The deity of the Holy Spirit is plainly to be inferred from the fact that Jesus is called " Immanuel ; which is, being interpreted, God with us. " Mat. 1, 23. Jesus was God, not because of his human mother ; but because he was begotten of God. As we have already seen, Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit. The deity of the Holy Spirit is evident.

Even more to the point are the words of the angel to Mary : " The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee wherefore also that which

is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." Luke 1, 35. Jesus was called the Son of God because he was begotten of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God.

The deity of the Holy Spirit is farther evident from the fact that the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God. In Luke's record of the baptism of Jesus it is said: "The heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him." 3, 22. In Matthew's record of the same event it is said that "he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove." 3, 16. The Holy Ghost is therefore the Spirit of God. Perhaps the expression "Spirit of God" may not always refer to the Holy Spirit; but Matthew who speaks of the Spirit at the Lord's baptism as "The Spirit of God," speaks of the Lord as referring his power to cast out demons to the "Spirit of God." 12, 27. In this case the deity of the Spirit of God is evident. And we are reasonably safe in believing that this is the same Spirit of God that Matthew mentions in connection with the baptism of Jesus. If so, then, as this Spirit of God that casts out demons and the Holy Ghost are the same, the deity of the Holy Ghost is farther apparent.

The deity of the Holy Spirit also appears from the expression "Spirit of the Father." "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." Mat. 10, 20. Now, as we have already seen, Jesus had told the disciples that the Spirit should speak through them. Mark 13, 11. This is a parallel passage, the only difference being that Jesus here adds something to the expression used in Mark. There he says the Holy Ghost shall speak through the apostles; here he says that the Spirit of the Father shall speak through them. The Holy Ghost and the Spirit of the Father are the same. This implies the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is a person, not an influence. He it is who begot Jesus. He is the exalted and glorified Jesus. He is God. The difficulty of understanding how he may be all these and yet be a person distinct in personality from them, is not easy to overcome. We shall probably find our greatest help by dwelling upon the fact that the Holy Spirit is God. Just as surely as the Father is God, and just as surely as the Son is God, just so surely the Holy Spirit is God. These three are one—the great and glorious God. Are these three, the Father, the Son and the

Holy Spirit, different manifestations of God? Certainly; but they are personal manifestations. The Father is a spiritual manifestation of the fatherhood of God—his paternal love, his care for the needs of his children, his providence, his care for the happiness of us all. The Son is the physical manifestation of God, clearing up the mystery with which God had ever been surrounded sufficiently so that he might be intelligently known, and making atonement for the sins of men. The Spirit is the spiritual manifestation of God as the abiding presence, comforting, teaching, illuminating. These are different manifestations of God truly; but each separate manifestation comes in the form of a distinct personality. Yet each is God; and God is the ONE who is manifested in these three.

Failing to identify these three as one, we often border on the dangers of polytheism. God is one. There are not three Gods; but one God. John 5, 44. 17, 3. 1 Cor. 8, 4. 1 Tim 1, 17. We have no need to pray to the Son to intercede with the Father that the Father may intercede with God in our behalf. How often Christians think of the Son as a friend near at hand. Or in these later days of the prominence of the Spirit in our worship, how often

we think of the Spirit as near us, with us; of the Son, Jesus, as just above us in Heaven, ever looking toward us and interceding with the Father; of the Father as farther away—on the great, white, glorious, cold throne, his face half averted from the pleading Son, but finally yielding to his pleading; of God as away off in the unbounded universe, the awful Creator and stern Judge. All this is wholly false. God is one. Every whisper of the Spirit is the whisper of the whole soul of the one God, Father, Son and Spirit. Every prayer faltered to the Spirit or to the Son is a prayer to God the Father, Son and Spirit. God is one. It is no more possible that he could love as Spirit or as Son and not love also as Father and as God, than that the mother could love her child with one-third of her soul while the other two-thirds did not care anything about it.

“God is one. His majesty
Over all the world around,
In every song, in every sound,
Is mingled with his Father-love,
Is mingled with his Brother-love,
Is mingled with his Spirit-love,
In voice from Heaven,
Is Jesus given,
In Holy Spirit, Heaven-sent dove.”

CHAPTER I X.

PRAYER.

The frequency and the intensity of prayer are in proportion to the sense of need. One who is satisfied that he can get on reasonably well without help from God will not ask his help. Many men who have been brought up to pray, continue to go through the forms of prayer long after they have ceased to pray because of a sense of pressing need. In times of disaster and of peril the soul is recalled from its self-righteousness and is moved to ask God to interfere in its behalf. The true Christian should realize that the pressing need is always his; that the time of disaster or of peril is always at hand; if not for his own soul, then for the souls of many whom he meets. The hour of real disaster is not always the hour of breaking railroad bridges or of sinking ships or of burning houses. But often the soul is thrown into ruin or is threatened with destruction when all the world is free from calamity, and when every prospect pleases the

eye, and when every feature of business and of society is beaming with smiles.

As judgment is put off, and as punishment is delayed, men become careless. As man becomes proficient in making nature serve his wants; as he learns the use of the elements; as he learns to foretell the route of the storm; as sea and land and air are made to serve his will and want, by means of the fertility of his own brain; he feels less the need of God's interference in his behalf, and so he asks it less frequently. And asking less, he less often renders thanks to God for the unlimited raw material without which his brain were racked in vain to provide for his wants.

Perhaps one should not pray God to do for him what he can do for himself; but it is certain that he who can do most for himself is as dependent upon God as is he who can do least for himself. The man himself is the gift of God. The more capable he is of adapting to his own need the material with which God has surrounded him, so much more is God honored in the superiority of this man whom he has made.

Men are short-sighted who cease to pray because the interference of God in a miraculous

way is not needed today as it once was. As men know more of the universe of matter and of spirit and of law, they ought to be able to recognize the God who made it all and who preserves it all, without requiring him to do something unusual to their experience in order to inspire their faith. Men ought today to have that higher type of faith and of reverence that comes from knowledge—a faith inspired by laws understood, rather than by astounding wonders seen, produced by laws not known or dreamed of.

In any case, knowledge of any kind does not reach beyond God; as if in man's onward march God were behind his back. If we have made a little advance out of the deep darkness, let us realize that every advance out of darkness is toward the centre of light—toward the Father of lights—toward which, toward whom, as we move on, let us stretch out our hands and pray.

Let us consider the condition of the soul in prayer.

In the beginning of true prayer the soul is in a condition of rest and receptivity. Prayer, when the soul is in this condition, is subjective. It is communion with God for the soul's own

pleasure and profit. It is in subjective prayer that men often reach conditions of great ecstasy, and are made confident of their own acceptance with God. This kind of prayer exclusively engaged in makes men visionary, unreal and dreamy. It unfits them for such contact with men of the world as our human state makes necessary. Even prayer may be abused. One may love to be always in the presence of a very dear friend; but others may suffer for this man's selfishness if he does not sometimes force himself away to do a little work. Nevertheless this subjective prayer is necessary to every Christian. The first characteristic of this kind of prayer is filial regard. The child comes to the loving Father, saying: "Our Father which art in heaven." Mat. 6, 9.

The address to God as "Our Father" is followed, almost immediately, by a sense of the majesty of him whom we have approached by a name so dear and so familiar. We almost fear that we have presumed too much by that address. We hasten to show our adoration by adding: "Hallowed be thy name."

From God's majesty the soul at once rebounds to its own littleness and sinfulness, and enters into a state of humility. Jesus teaches

us that we must be humble in prayer. "And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee." Mat. 6, 5-6. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 18, 10-14.

When the soul has come into the presence

of the heavenly Father, and has been moved by his majesty to adoration, and has been humbled by its own comparative worthlessness, can it then be unforgiving? The first question that God asks the soul, as in its humility it seeks forgiveness, is, Do you forgive every one his sin against you? Shall a soul find it necessary to plead for mercy and for forgiveness at its Father's hand and be audacious enough to hold a grudge against a neighbor? It is impossible. He who comes to God and seems to pray, but does not forgive all men all things, does not meet with the favor of God; and God does not forgive him. "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Mat. 6, 12. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." 14-15. "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Mark 11, 25.

If the attempt is made to meet God in prayer without any or all of the characteristics already mentioned, the soul is not sincere. It is de-

ceiving itself, if it is not attempting to deceive God. But if these conditions have been realized in the soul, then it is transparent in its sincerity. The man prays with the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any way of wickedness in me." Ps. 139, 23. There must be no long-robed, vainly repetitious babbling; but sincerity. "They which devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; these shall receive greater condemnation." Mark 12, 40.

The soul that is in this condition of sincerity believes in God. Here is confirmation of all that has been written by the prophets and by the apostles. The soul, in the presence of God, conscious of his fatherhood, adoring, humble, forgiving, sincere, knows that God "is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." Heb. 11, 6. This faith is necessary to true prayer. "Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11, 24.

The final result of all these conditions is acquiescence in the divine will. Has any one doubted God, or felt it hard to pass under the

rod? Come up through these successive conditions of spirit, required by God's word, and find yourself saying, as with the natural impulse of a soul at one with God in all his thought and purpose, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Luke 22, 42.

In the presence of the Father, adoring, humble, forgiving, sincere, believing, conforming to his will, the soul from Pisgah's lofty height may view the promised land. This is subjective prayer. The soul rests, it receives of God's fulness, it breathes a pure and stimulating atmosphere.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air :
His watchword at the gates of death—
He enters Heaven with prayer."

But, if the Christian is properly balanced by the Word of God upon this subject, he will realize that he has not yet come to "the gates of death." He is not yet permitted to "enter Heaven." Peter wanted to build three tabernacles on the summit of the mount of transfiguration; but "he wist not what he said." There is work to be done in the valley. The soul soon feels this. The first half of the prayer has been subjective; but now the soul begins

to grow bold and to gird itself for the wrestle with the angel. This is objective prayer. The soul now ceases to receive only, it begins to expend. The first characteristic of this objective prayer is earnest desire. The soul has not come up to the city of God for naught. It has not come up merely to rest and to be filled. For a little while it may have forgotten its errand in its joy with God; but now there comes rushing back upon it that great desire with which it is burdened. This desire may be for some temporal blessing or for the salvation of some friend; but it is intense or it will not prevail. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." Luke 22, 44. "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered." Rom. 8, 26. "Night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith." 1 Thes. 3, 10.

Another characteristic of objective prayer is directness of appeal. The soul knows what

it wants, and it states it simply and directly. If a man is on a sinking ship he prays with some point and power. If a man feels that his neighbor's soul rests upon him, he expresses himself directly and with little circumlocution. These vague prayers that go roving around and around the world in search of something with which to entertain God and the people, show that the poor soul has no burning request to make. It does not seem to want anything in particular from God. Let some particular desire possess the soul and the appeal is direct; as the Saviour teaches that it should be. "And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." Mat. 6, 7.

A third characteristic of objective prayer is importunity. "And shall not God avenge his elect, which cry to him day and night, and he is longsuffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily." Luke 18, 7. See also the story of the man who sought loaves from his friend. 11, 5-13. These verses teach clearly that we may come again and again, until it seems to us that we shall weary God with the repetition of our request. This is not the vain repetitions that the Saviour

condemned. This is the proof of the soul's earnestness. It also proves that the soul has confidence in God. Only pray and faint not, and God will be pleased and will grant the intent of every right request.

How natural is this. This state of earnest activity of soul, leading to direct and importunate appeal, cannot be reached without preparation. The preparation is found in the subjective state of the soul, in which it comes to the Father, and waits before him in self examination, until it is carried through the various steps already mentioned into the inner sanctuary of the Almighty. Here is an important lesson for all Christians. Do not rush into the presence of God. Even the kings of the earth must be approached respectfully and thoughtfully. When men approach God, let them hear his words to Moses: "Put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Ex. 3, 5.

Let us now consider the time and place of prayer.

And, first, the time. There should be an appointed hour of prayer. This was customary with the early disciples. "Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour

of prayer, being the ninth hour." Acts 3, 1. It is equally important, in our day, that there should be an hour set apart for each one for himself alone. If the Christian has no such hour, he is almost certain to neglect prayer. His soul may often go out to God in the midst of his work or at any particular call; but it is in only a desultory and inefficient manner. One may pray upon the streets as he passes along, or in his place of business as he is about his work; but there are some kinds of demons who come not out except by that kind of prayer that is accompanied by "strong crying and tears." This must usually be in private. And to make sure of this private hour, there must be a set time. Emily C. Judson, who, by the death of her husband, was left in Burmah a widow with three children, has revealed the power of this set hour of prayer in the case of her eldest sister, Lavinia Chubbuck. It was Miss Lavinia's custom to rise regularly at midnight to pray. Little Emily, supposed to be asleep, often heard these midnight prayers. And she bears testimony to their influence upon her life. It is a matter of experience that those come nearest to God and maintain the highest level of Christian life who have a set time to

pray. It is the experience of every Christian that his own life has been happiest and most useful when he has met his heavenly Father faithfully at an appointed hour. There are few hymns that express a deeper need of the soul or a more refined and hallowed enjoyment than that one so constantly on the lips of men everywhere :

“ Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father’s throne,
Make all my wants and wishes known.

“ In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter’s snare,
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.”

If prayer is worth much to men it is worth a few moments devoted exclusively to it every day ; a few moments in which prayer shall not be made merely the incident or the accident of the hour ; but the business to which these moments are wholly and earnestly devoted.

Christians should not only pray at the set hour, but at all times. “ With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all persever-

ance and supplication for all the saints, and on my behalf." Eph. 6, 18. But at all times may prove to be at no time. When, however, the soul is kept alive to God by the set hour of prayer, then does it find many occasions to breathe petitions heavenward.

And, indeed, these occasions so multiply that the soul may be always in the spirit of prayer. This should be so. "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thes. 5, 17. "Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving." Col. 4, 2. The time of prayer, then, is all time. But that it may be possible for the soul to "pray without ceasing," it is necessary that there should be the appointed hour of prayer.

We proceed to consider the place of prayer. In the New Testament we find that prayer was sometimes offered in the presence of the public. Jesus made several public prayers. "Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened." Luke 3, 21. "And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." 23, 34. "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my

spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost." v. 45. These prayers were brief, and they were called out by the occasion; but they are sufficient to warrant us in calling upon God in the midst of the multitude when there is occasion to do so. Moreover, the house of God is called the house of prayer. "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers." Mat. 21, 13. It was a public place of resort for prayer. In places where there were no houses of God, the people were accustomed to resort to some sequestered place; as to the river side. "And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer." Acts 16, 13. Here public prayers were offered.

Besides these public places, where prayer was offered in the presence of all who were assembled, there were places less public, and yet not wholly private. Places in which a select few were alone. Jesus and his disciples often composed such a company. In this limited and select company Jesus was much more free in prayer than when he was in the miscellaneous multitude. "And it came to pass, as he was praying alone, the disciples were with

him." Luke 9, 18. "And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray." 28. "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray." Mat. 26, 36. "Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples." John 18, 2. See also John 17. In such semi-public companies the disciples were accustomed to meet for prayer after the Saviour's ascension. "These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Acts 1, 14. "And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying." 12, 12. Those who came to these semi-public places of prayer were usually of one accord, and of one faith. Here the disciples, as in the presence of friends of the Lord, could pray together with simplicity and with informality for the coming of his kingdom.

Again, the New Testament is full of references to prayer offered in private. Jesus was

even oftener in some place alone than in company with a few chosen disciples. He sought out solitary places where he could be alone with his Father—mountain tops and desert places. "And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone." Mat. 14, 23. "And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." Mark 1, 35. "And after he had taken leave of them, he departed into the mountain to pray." 6, 46. "And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God." Luke 6, 12. See 5, 16. 11, 1. This is fully in accord with his instruction: "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." Mat. 6, 6. The Saviour's inner chamber was the mountain or the desert, for he had not where to lay his head. The early Christians often went for their seclusion onto the house-top. "Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray." Acts 10, 9.

And, finally, prayer should be offered everywhere. "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing." 1 Tim. 2, 8.

But in this matter of place as well as in that of time, we find that the broader command can be obeyed only by first obeying the narrower one. Before men will pray everywhere they must have prayed somewhere. Before people will pray in the great congregation they must have prayed in the semi-public circle of prayer, met in some smaller, appointed place. And before their voices are heard even in these smaller, appointed places of prayer, they must have entered into the inner chamber and have shut the door.

We are creatures of time and place. We love our birthdays and our haunts, our Christmas days and our firesides, the anniversaries of our marriage days and the altars where we were wed. And so we love the silent chamber where, at the appointed hour of secret prayer, God's voice is heard. So likewise we love the place where subdued and trembling voices are raised in the circle that meets at the appointed time and place for social prayer. And we love the triumphant cadences of public

prayer, arising in the house of God upon the Lord's day at the morning and evening hours of worship. And so, blessed by this accumulation of divinely appointed agencies, we are sent forth with souls full of prayer to pray wherever we go, singing and making melody with our hearts to the Lord.

It will be noticed that this second part of our subject, the time and place of prayer, is necessary to the condition of the soul in prayer, considered in our first part. So we might have treated this second part first; but there is not apt to be a time or a place of prayer unless there has first been something of the spirit of prayer. So these two phases of the subject belong together. Time and place promote the spirit, and the spirit leads the soul to set the time and to fix the place. But why the spirit, time or place? Job's question, though often answered, is forever asked: "What profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" Job 21, 15.

Let us therefore consider the objects of prayer.

These objects are of two kinds, spiritual and physical; and then there are many texts of scripture that mention prayer as having for its

object the general welfare of all men. Let us consider first the spiritual objects. We are taught to pray for enemies. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." Mat. 5, 44. Perhaps the primary object of our Lord in teaching men to pray for their enemies was to bless the man who prays. We have already seen that the spirit of forgiveness is necessary in true prayer. Perhaps there is no surer way of detecting one's unforgiving temper than to begin to pray for one's enemies. But when the soul has detected its lack of forgiveness, and when it has prayed itself into a state of forgiveness, then the prayer for one's enemy is of service also to this enemy. Pray for your enemies, both for your own sake and for their sakes.

As one continues his prayer for his enemy he comes more and more to feel the need of forgiveness for himself. The next spiritual object, therefore, is forgiveness for oneself. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." Acts 8, 22. The soul now begins to long for the forgiveness of the sin of others. He prays for this. It is his privilege so to do: "And Jesus said, Father,

forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23, 34. "If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death." 1 John 5, 16. This condition of soul is to be distinguished from the spirit that forgives others. This is the condition in which one is overwhelmed with the burden of his own or of another's sin and guilt; and in which he beseiges the throne of God for pardon. Of course this presupposes conviction of sin.

Men should pray, also, for faith. "But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22, 32. "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." 17, 5. If one comes to God with anything like a true conception of the fact that without faith God has not promised to answer any prayer, he will pray for faith almost at the first. And when one learns that nothing is impossible to faith, he will summon what little faith he has to pray for more.

The Holy Spirit is another object of prayer. We are to pray for the Holy Spirit for ourselves. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how

much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11, 13. We should also pray for the Holy Spirit for others. "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost." Acts 8, 15. It is possible that there was a special gift of the Holy Spirit for the apostolic churches. If so, the Holy Spirit may not be manifest to us in the same way as that in which he came to the early churches. But his power with us need not be less. We may pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon ourselves and upon others, with full confidence that God will be pleased.

Again, prayer may be made for deliverance from suffering. Surely, if Jesus found relief in prayer when he was in the hour of his awful distress, we also may seek such relief. "Is any among you suffering? let him pray." James 5, 13. If the weight of outward suffering is not always lifted, the burden may always be rolled from off the soul. The Saviour was crucified, although he prayed that if possible he might be spared. He could not be spared: but his spirit was soothed by the angel. His soul was delivered; and our souls also may be delivered. And our souls may be delivered

not only from all kinds of suffering, but also from temptation and from sinning. "And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Mat. 6, 13. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." 26, 41. "Now we pray to God that ye do no evil." II Cor. 13, 7. If we may not pray to be delivered from sin, we may pray to be delivered from sinning. Paul prayed to have his thorn removed; but God preferred to give him deliverance from its dominion, not to remove the thorn. We had better pray for deliverance from the dominion of sin.

We are to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God. "Thy kingdom come." Mat. 6, 10. Perhaps prayer has no spiritual object that requires more of the genuine spirit of prayer than this. When the kingdom of God comes, the present order of the world will be changed. Selfish ambition and the love of gain will be gone. He who prays "thy kingdom come" must "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." I John 2, 15.

We are to pray for guidance. The apostles prayed for guidance in the choice of an apostle to fill the place of Judas. "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts

of all men, shew of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place." Acts 1, 24-25. And Paul often prayed that Christians might be guided into the discernment of truth. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment." Phil. 1, 9. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Col. 1, 9. See Eph. 1, 15-18. Let us be careful how we mock God by praying for guidance, and then by choosing for ourselves a guiding star in the firmament of our own desires. We must hold the tiller; but let us pray that God will be our pilot, and that we may steer after his pointing finger.

The last one of these spiritual objects of prayer is utterance. Paul, the learned; Paul, blessed with the eloquence of a burning heart, asked prayers of his brethren that he might be able to utter the truth. "With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all persever-

ance and supplication for all the saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me." Eph. 6, 18-19. "Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving; withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds ; that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Col. 4, 2-3. If Paul, speaking with power, needed to pray for utterance, surely we need to make this prayer—we who so stammer or are dumb.

Let us now notice briefly the physical objects of prayer. The Lord taught men to pray for food : "Give us this day our daily bread." Mat. 6, 11. If this prayer is accompanied by the diligence of the fowls of the air, and by their frugality and simplicity, it will be answered. But by "daily bread" God does not mean luxury, nor amassed fortune, nor prodigality.

James teaches men to pray for healing. "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;

and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." 5, 14-16. See page 153.

We may pray for deliverance from enemies, from danger or from death. "And pray ye that it be not in the winter. For those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be." Mark 13, 18-19. "Peter therefore was kept in the prison : but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him." Acts 12, 5. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judæa, and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints." Rom. 15, 30-31. "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you." Phile. 22.

We should pray also for the general welfare of all men. For little children. "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray." Mat.

19, 13. For Christians. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me." John 17, 9. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word." 20. "We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus." Col. 1, 3. Our prayers may not have so great power to confer blessings upon the little children as did Christ's prayers over them; but thousands of little children, in the midst of Christian communities, are developing into profligate young people for the lack of earnest prayer for them. Christians ought to throw this loving restraint around the little children.

And Christians ought to pray for each other. We have already quoted James' exhortation to Christians to pray for each other; and our common love should inspire these fraternal petitions for God's blessing upon all who love him. Here may be found a solution for many a church quarrel. Pray for each other.

But pray for others also. For kings and officials. Christian people often feel that our political affairs are so corrupt that there is no hope in that direction; so they neglect to have

any part in these matters ; some neglect even to vote. Did God abandon the world because it was wicked? May Christians soon learn that where wickedness abounds there is the very place where they should be found praying. Pray for those who are in official places. It required some grace to do this in those times of official wickedness and persecution in which Paul wrote to Timothy, saying; "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men ; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity." 1 Tim. 2, 1-2.

Not only for officials, however, but for all men. How large the heart of him who prays becomes ; how all-inclusive its love must be to cover such a range of objects as this, and still not be indifferent, but earnest in prayer.

Indeed, Christians may pray for everything desired. "In nothing be anxious ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. 4, 6. In many things we shall ask amiss ; but we are better for having asked. There is no more infallible revealer of improper desire than prayer for the gratification

of that desire. Many and many a time does the Christian go to God intending to pray with faith and with importunity for a much desired object, only to find, as he composes himself into the true spirit of prayer, that his desire is selfish and unworthy. Prayer saves him from the wrong desire and from the wrong action that would have grown out of it.

And now the circle of prayer is complete; and we find ourselves brought back again to the spirit of prayer with which we began. And so it always is. The spiritual and the physical needs of the great, wicked, suffering world, will ever inspire Christians to pray; this spirit of prayer will always turn their hearts and their feet toward the appointed places of prayer, at the appointed hour of prayer; and there, in turn, the time and the place will intensify the spirit and reveal the need more fully. The circle will prove to be a spiral stair up which the soul will mount with ever accelerating movement, rising even into the presence of the Father, Jehovah. In this presence the soul rests awhile. Then, aroused, he importunes the Father, with confidence and with power. Then down the stair he speeds with blessings for the world.

CHAPTER X.

NECESSITY AND CERTAINTY OF PERSEVERANCE.

Midway between the Scylla of fatalism and the Charybdis of doubt is the safe but narrow channel of perseverance. If it is true that all real Christians will finally be saved, it is so only because they persevere. If it is true that a Christian may be lost, it does not follow that even one Christian will be lost.

There is such a thing as the perseverance of the saints. This expression means that the real Christian will hold on to his Lord until he comes again "without sin unto salvation." He will continue in faith and in good works through every adverse circumstance. He may be tempted to give up his hope; but he will be so dismayed with the prospect of losing the love and the favor and the life of his Saviour, that he will be often heard to say: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Nowhere else in all the knowledge of man is a certain salvation from ultimate disaster held out to him with a sufficient authority. If in the face of this the

Christian turns away from God, he will be lost ; but, if he has really known God, he will not turn away from him.

Those who have really been born again must and will persevere unto the end.

They must persevere. Christians are under the most serious obligation to persevere in their love and in their fidelity to God. There is a certain weak sentimentality that teaches that Christians need not think of these obligations because they are not under law but under grace ; their love for their dear Saviour is a sufficient guarantee that they will persevere. Then why all these exhortations and commands ? Are Christians today so much better than were those of New Testament times that they are not in need of the spur of obligation ? Christians are not under law in the sense in which the Jews were under the Law ; but the law of the Christian dispensation is more exacting, in its way, than was the old Law. God never intended that his grace should do away with the Christian's obligation to persevere in right doing. But, it is contended, love is a higher incentive than obligation. Perhaps it is ; but the question is not one of choice between the two. The com-

mands of God's Word back Christian love with Christian obligation. Even Christian love is a Christian obligation.

Let us look immediately to the commands and exhortations of the New Testament which teach this directly. "Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love." John 15, 9. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." 1 Cor. 16, 13. "Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved." Phil. 4, 1. "Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving." Col. 4, 2. "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing." 11 Thes. 3, 13. "Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal." 1 Tim. 6, 12. "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness." 11 Pet. 3, 17. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 20-21. "Howbeit that which ye have, hold fast till I come." Rev. 2, 25. Com-

mands and exhortations of this nature are too definite to be mistaken.

Some of these commands and exhortations are based upon the fact that Christ may come again at any moment. "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13, 33-37. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with

fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight." II Pet. 3, 10-14. If we loved as we ought there would be no need of these exhortations. But many Christians feel considerable uneasiness at the thought of the coming of their Lord. The condition of the Christian world today suggests the need of just such a doctrine of obligation as this.

Peter makes Satan's persistent determination to destroy Christians the basis of a stirring exhortation to persevere. "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand steadfast in your faith." I Pet. 5, 8. The persistence of Satan makes it necessary that Christians should persevere.

Many of these commands and exhortations are cheerful, being based upon high hopes of ultimate success. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch

as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15, 58. "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble." 11 Pet. 1, 10. Christians have more reason to be cheerful than any other class of people; but that army would soon be demoralized that should stack its arms to play while the enemy was charging it. Christians may safely depend upon this, then; that so long as there are these definite commands of the New Testament, exhorting them to persevere in their Christian lives, there is obligation in the case.

But this will be evident to a thoughtful person upon other grounds than those of Scripture command. As, for example, the weakness of human nature. The very physical weakness of our mortal bodies makes watchfulness and prayerfulness necessary. The disciples were found asleep in almost the sublimest moment in all history. "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mat. 26, 41. No one ever had the privilege before of watching with the Son of God in an

hour of such supreme moment to the world; no one will ever have that privilege again. This great honor was conferred upon mortals but once in the history of the world; and that once they failed because these mortal bodies are limited in their power of endurance. The disciples were willing to watch; they were no doubt exceedingly anxious to keep awake. They did not know what to answer Jesus when he came the second time and found them sleeping. But their very anxiety courted slumber. The past few hours had brought them to the limit of human endurance. For several days the certainty that Jesus was about to be crucified had weakened them with grief. The long discourses of the Saviour had been of such an important nature, and the impressions made had been so deep, that all their powers had been taxed to the utmost. The excitement and sorrow of the early part of the night, and the present midnight stillness, broken only by the low monotone of the Saviour's pleading voice, were more than human weakness could bear; and, resisting sleep even in their dreams, they slept. Poor human bodies! How often grief overcomes them, and the avenues to the soul are open to the "roaring lion." How often

the wearied brain and the unstrung nerves allow the hasty word or the evil deed! However keen our watch may be we shall too often sleep and leave the Saviour to tread the winepress of his suffering alone. Let us keep our watch with all our strength.

But there is weakness of the flesh in the sense in which Paul uses the word "flesh"; as representing our whole degenerate nature. "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8, 12-13. Our physical weakness is not the worst feature of our weakness. The spirit is not always willing. All that any one need do to be lost is to give free rein to his nature. The only reason why the Christian is saved while the unregenerate man is lost is that the Christian has determined, by the grace of God, to fight his evil human nature till in the end he conquers; while the unregenerate man gives his human nature its way. The world, the flesh and the devil will run away with the soul of every man who does not fight his "flesh" to the very end.

It is possible, then, that even a Christian

may be lost; and this possibility makes it necessary that the Christian should persevere. This possibility is not merely an inference from the foregoing texts; there are other texts even more definite. Some of these teach clearly that perseverance is a condition of salvation. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Mat. 10, 22. 24, 13. "If we endure, we shall also reign with him." 11 Tim. 2, 12. "To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." Rev. 2, 7. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." 11. "To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." 17. "And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations." 26. "He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." 3, 5. "He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and

I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name." 12. "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne." 21. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." 21, 7. "Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Rom. 11, 22. "Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end." Heb. 3, 6. These references might be indefinitely multiplied.

Notice one other which emphasizes the direction that this perseverance should take. "As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal. These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you

astray. And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him. And now, my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him." 1 John 2, 24-29. Christians must persevere in the Gospel which they heard from the beginning. If they do so persevere they will also persevere in their attachment to Christ. They must abide in him. The relation of the Christian to Christ is vital; it must be maintained.

By failure to keep these conditions of salvation the Christian may be lost. But especially is he in danger of being lost by failure to sustain this vital relation to Jesus and his Gospel. Jesus himself states this plainly in John 15, 4-6. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him,

the same beareth much fruit : for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

It is possible, also, for Christians wilfully to do wrong, and so to commit the unpardonable sin. "For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance ; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Heb. 6, 4-6. Here are five expressions that point to real Christians. Who were once "enlightened," means Christians. The same word is used in Ephesians 1, 18. "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling." Here the reference is clearly to Christians. And in II Tim. 1, 10, the word is used in such a way as to make it clear that those who were "enlightened" had life and incorruption. The word is used in one other place, Heb. 10, 32, where the writer is certainly speaking of Christians as having

been "enlightened." This one expression is conclusive. But there follow four others in the closest connection, each adding to the certainty that the persons here described were Christians. They had "tasted of the heavenly gift;" they had been "partakers of the Holy Ghost;" and once tasted "the good word of God;" they had tasted "the powers of the age to come." The plain inference here is that Christians may do wrong and be lost. The same thing is taught in chapter 10, 26-27. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries."

Moreover, it is possible for Christians to be lost, if they simply neglect to do well. Paul was a Christian; but he ran and he fought and he buffeted his body because there was a possibility that, if he did not so persevere, even after he had preached to others, he might himself be lost. "I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be

rejected." 1 Cor. 9, 26-27. And from Rev. 3, 11, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown," we learn that simple neglect to hold on may cost the Christian his place in Heaven.

The Christian must persevere. The Word of God commands it, and exhorts to perseverance. The weakness of human nature makes it necessary. And the fact that even Christians may finally be lost requires it. The conclusion is irresistible. The Christian has no right to feel so secure in walking up and down upon the brink of the horrible pit. He may yet suffer in its awful depths. Did not Adam fall? And he had no evil in his nature as we have. Let those who have boasted their security be still and fear. They need not fall; but they will fall if they do not persevere.

But, in the second place, Christians will persevere.

This fact is just as clearly stated as the other. "And not a hair of your head shall perish. In your patience ye shall win your souls." Luke 21, 18-19. Perhaps we ought not too certainly to apply these words to ourselves, seeing they were spoken to a special company; but in so doing we shall not go far astray, for the doctrine is

taught elsewhere also. "And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For by hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Rom. 8, 23-25. "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul." Heb. 10, 39. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest how that they all are not of us." 1 John 2, 19. Very many seem to begin the Christian life who really do not begin it. They seem to repent of sin, and to turn to God. They are baptized and have a name and a place with the people of God; but afterwards they are lost. There was some mistake about their regeneration. They went out from us, but they were not of us; that is, they were never really Christians. If they had been "they would have continued with us." Or, in other words, you may know a Christian by this sign: HE PERSEVERES.

Farthermore, the nature of salvation makes it certain that the Christian will persevere. Christians are dead to sin. Notice what Paul says of this, and let us see if we can understand what he means. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." Rom. 6, 1-4. He has been reasoning that salvation is the free gift of God to sinful men, upon the condition that they have faith to receive it. Moreover, the greater the sin forgiven, so much greater is the grace bestowed. Grace is such an excellent thing that the more we have of it the better; therefore, shall we sin that we may have more of it? No. The Christian can not sin; he is dead to sin. That is, in regeneration the soul has been given power to decide against sin; and this it has actually done. The grace of God and the gift of grace have enabled the soul to come

into possession of itself for God; and to wrest itself from the power of sin, which before had determined its action. Before, the soul was under the power of sin, because it loved sin; it lived with sin and in sin. But now the soul has seen the true nature of sin, its former bosom friend, and has turned away from it with hatred. It is as if one or the other of two old friends were dead. Sin was a viper in the man's bosom. A devil in his arms, pretending to be a pure true friend. The Christian has seen that his supposed angel was a devil. He has plucked the viper out of his bosom. And he has been enabled to turn away from his false friend; only by the grace of God. If he takes back his old sin, he must do so in the face of the Saviour who died to enable him to break away from sin, and in despite of the grace of God. This he may do; but this he will not do.

And as this old friendship is broken up, as the black fiend with his sin is dismissed, the soul is free to form a new friendship. It has said to sin: "Begone! You deceived me. I am henceforth dead to you. If you insist upon addressing me, I still will not recognize you nor speak to you." And then this soul

has turned to Jesus, and has sought to become alive to him ; to have him for its friend. The soul has not turned to Jesus in vain. It has become alive to Jesus and so to God, the Father. What a glorious exchange of friendship and of life ! The Christian can turn back to the devil if he will. His will is not forced. But to do so he must turn away from Jesus. Life with Jesus is too precious. He who has once known it will not give it up.

Moreover, the heart is changed. It is not simply an exchange of a worse friend for a better, and of a worse life for a better ; not simply the exchange of a devil for God, that has taken place. The exchange never would have been made if the heart had not first been changed. The unregenerate person does not serve the Devil simply because he can not resist him. He loves him. The unregenerate human heart is in love with its sin. The sinner must not be thought of as a captive, chafing in his fetters. He is in fetters truly ; but he does not know it, and he has no abiding desire to be other than what he is. A young man who had already been several times intoxicated, and who was already fast in the toils of intemperance, once said, when asked to sign

a temperance pledge : " Sign away my liberty, my manhood ! No, sir. I am a free man now to drink or not as I choose, and I will not give up my freedom." It was useless to attempt to show him that he would be signing his emancipation proclamation. He loved his sin. His heart was going the way of its love. But when the soul has a vision of Jesus, it begins to abhor itself ; and when finally it has learned to love him, there is found to be in it a new disposition. The things that were loved are hated. The will that once was perverted, now is brought into unison with God, and is made strong to do his will. There has been such a radical change that the man is a new creature. Men follow the lead of their hearts. The Christian cannot be lost unless his heart is first turned back from its renewed condition. Paul was sure that the Christian would persistently refuse to allow this. " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved

us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8, 35-39.

The same great truth is presented in another way in 1 Thes. 5, 4-6. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober." Every Christian knows well that he has come out of darkness into light. Every conversion of a man from his sin to God is the miracle of healing the blind repeated. The most noticeable characteristic of unregenerate men is their absolute blindness to the real condition of their own hearts. Especially is this true if they are not what the world calls wicked. They are children of darkness. They do not see any danger. They do not see the scars and the wounds that deform them. The characteristic of the Christian is that he has come out of this darkness into light. And the dark-

ness that seemed light enough to him while he was in it, is seen to be darker and darker the farther he climbs toward the hill-tops of day. The Christian stands upon these hill-tops, warm and light in the sun. He looks toward the north where the great city of destruction lies bustling with the activity of sin. Beyond the city is the cold lake of death. The lake itself is invisible in the wind-riven darkness that arises out of it; and hovers over it, and is driven up from it over the city, whose grimy smoke-stacks continually send up silent fantastic forms to mingle with the night sky, and to deepen the darkness. At three different points in the city, furnace fires throw their dark red gleam, with scattering sparks, into the gloom. Sounds of shouting and of laughter come up from the city. The inhabitants do not notice the darkness. They think it is light. As the Christian's eye follows the dark sky up toward the zenith, he sees the edge of this darkness, held in check by the sunshine, and blushing swarthily under the restraint. Beyond this edge, and all over the hills, is the clear blue of a sunlit sky. All around are the high lights of day. Looking out from the city, the city seems light; looking down from the

hill-tops, it is seen to be dark. The children of light will live in the light, if they can. And they can; for by the power of God it has become a matter of choice.

But salvation does more than this for the Christian. Still again, certainty that the Christian will persevere is found in the fact that there is a vital union between him and Christ. "For we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." Heb. 3, 14. The germ of that immortal life that would not suffer Christ to remain in the grave, is implanted in the Christian's soul. It is Christ formed within.

Of course, then, Christians are children of God. And the children of God, persevere. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Every one that doeth sin

doeth also lawlessness : and sin is lawlessness. And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins ; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him." 1 John 3, 1-6. " For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." 5, 4.

In the nature of salvation, then, we find strong ground for believing that Christians will persevere. They are dead to sin. They are alive to Christ. Their hearts are changed. They have become children of light. They are partakers of Christ. They are children of God. This is a strong case for the Christian, and it inspires him to hold on.

And Christians will persevere because God is interested in their behalf. He has elected them to salvation. It is not the place here to attempt an explanation of this doctrine ; but simply to show that it makes it morally certain that real Christians will persevere. The Word of God must speak for itself. " And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved : but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Mat. 24, 22. " As

touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance." Rom. 11, 28-29. "So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." Phil. 2, 12-13. These references, however, clearly indicate that this election does not make salvation sure to those who are disobedient; but to those who persevere.

God, who has elected the Christian to salvation through faith and obedience, is also able and faithful to keep him to the end. Jesus himself says that God is able. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My father, which hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." John 10, 27-29. Paul was certain that God was able to keep his soul. "For I know him whom I have believed, and I

am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." 11 Tim. 1, 12. Jude, also, was certain that God was able to guard Christians from stumbling. "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore." 24-25. No doubt God is able. Will he? Yes. God is faithful. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." 1 Cor. 10, 13. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it." 1 Thes. 5, 24. God's election is according to his foreknowledge. It is certain that real Christians will persevere. And God is able and faithful to keep them. It is doubly certain that they will persevere.

Jesus is also interested in behalf of all Christians. He prayed for them that they might be kept. "Holy Father, keep them in

thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word." John 17, 11, 15, 20. He also establishes them in the faith. "The testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end." 1 Cor. 1, 6-8. See also 1 Thes. 3, 13. 11 Thes. 2, 16-17.

Also the Holy Spirit intercedes for Christians. "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. 8, 26. And in him they are sealed. "Now he that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and annointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 11 Cor. 1, 21-22. "In whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Eph. 1, 13.

Our consideration of the teachings of the

New Testament upon both sides of this question compels us to the conclusion : first, that it is possible for the Christian to be lost. The free will that God gave man he will never force. The deep pit is ever open. All who desire to do so, have power to throw themselves in. Moreover, all men are naturally drawn toward its brink, and are inclined to fall into its depths, just as there is an awful impulse to fall over the edge of a high cliff on the top of which one may be standing. Of course this tendency is greatly modified in the Christian, and it is continually being farther modified, being opposed by the new nature ; but it is still sufficiently strong to make perseverance necessary in order to escape. Here is the Christian's cause of fear and humiliation.

But, in the second place, we conclude that the Christian will not be lost. Not simply because he is a Christian today ; but because, having really become a Christian, he will fight the good fight of faith to the end. The great question for every one to settle then, is : Am I a Christian ? Many a man answers, Yes, who is mistaken. How can one know the truth, how be sure that he has not deceived himself or been deceived ? By this sign : **THE CHRISTIAN WILL PERSEVERE UNTO THE END.**

CHAPTER XI.

SANCTIFICATION.

It is a serious misfortune when anything ceases to grow before it reaches its normal size. This misfortune is in proportion to the value of the species to which the dwarf belongs. It is a great misfortune when a human body never comes to its full development. But, after all, "It is the mind that makes the man." Many a full-grown mind has been confined in a dwarfed body. If the mind is dwarfed, that is worse. If the Christian's growth in the divine life ceases this side of Heaven, that is worst of all. But this growth will be seriously hindered, if it does not entirely cease, in that Christian who supposes that the sanctification that is attributed by the New Testament to Christians, is perfect holiness. It is therefore essential to Christian growth that the truth be known about this doctrine.

In the beginning, let us study the meaning of the words to sanctify, sanctification, and sanctified as they are used in the New Testament.

To sanctify, the verb, means, first, to qualify, to fit, to legitimate. It is often used when no personal merit is exhibited on the part of the person sanctified. It is often used of inanimate things, in which case the moral quality of the object must of course be wanting. Its use in the New Testament grew out of its use in the Old Testament, where it often had only an external, ceremonial significance. It is so used in 1 Cor. 7, 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." That is, the unbelieving husband is considered as qualified or legitimated to live with the believing wife. This does not mean that he is saved, or that he is made a Christian, necessarily, by virtue of the relation which he sustains to his believing wife. But for reasons wholly apart from his personal character he is considered as a legitimate husband. These reasons Paul gives in the verse quoted above. If the man's unbelief destroyed his ability to be a legitimate husband, then the children would be illegitimate, or unclean. But this, manifestly, would be an injustice, provided the marriage had been contracted in good faith.

Therefore the husband is considered as made legitimate because of the virtue of his wife; the marriage relation stands; and the children are, therefore, legitimate, or holy, in the same sense as that in which the husband is sanctified. In Heb. 9, 13, the reference is more distinctly ceremonial. "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Here we have a good illustration of the ceremonial use spiritualized. The corresponding phrases are "sanctify to the cleansing of the flesh," and "cleanse your conscience from dead works." So far as this reference goes, to sanctify a person is to change the duty of his conscience from that of urging him to obey the ceremonial law, to that of urging him to serve the living God. We have this same ceremonial use, carried over into spiritual matters by way of illustration, in II Tim. 2, 21. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified,

meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work."

A second meaning of "to sanctify" is to set apart to a sacred service; to consecrate. In this sense the word is used of Jesus. "Say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world—" John 10, 36. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." 17, 19. These words of Jesus are especially significant when we remember that he was born without sin. The word sanctify can not mean more than that Jesus gave himself up, consecrated himself, to his sacred work. To which indeed the Father had set him apart, or consecrated him, long before. It can not mean "make holy," when used in reference to Jesus. But it is also used in this same verse with reference to Christians. Shall we give two different meanings to the same word in the same verse? It must sometimes be done; but the connection of the thought here does not demand it, nor even permit it. Christ sanctified himself that they also might be sanctified. "Also," in this close connection indicates a single meaning here for the word sanctify. Christ does not here say that he has consecrated himself that

Christians may be made perfect ; but that they may consecrate themselves, even as he has consecrated himself, to a sacred service. We find the same meaning of this word in Eph. 5, 25-27. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it ; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it in order that he might set it apart, cleansed by the washing of water with the word, to be presented to himself. Christ dedicated the church to himself. That is all we can honestly draw out of the verb "to sanctify" in this text.

The only other meaning of this verb that occurs in the New Testament is to revere, to hallow. "Hallowed be thy name." Mat. 6, 9.

The noun, sanctification, means, first, the process of becoming holy. That is, righteous living, Christian growth. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication ; that each of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel

in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles which know not God." 1 Thes. 4, 3-4. "For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification." v. 7. The word is here defined as abstaining from fornication and lust and such lives as the Gentiles live. Such an exhortation as this, made to those who were considered as sanctified, makes it certain that their sanctification consisted in a struggle for better character.

A second meaning is holiness, the end of the process. The end toward which righteousness tends. "For as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification." Rom. 6, 19. This end of the process—the holy state—is spoken of as the fruit of service rendered to God. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life." v. 22. The word is farther used in this sense in 1 Cor. 1, 30-31. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the

Lord." Here Christ is called our sanctification in the same sense as that in which he is called our righteousness. The original word for righteousness is the word often translated justification. The doctrine of imputation is here applied to sanctification in the very same way as that in which we are accustomed to apply it to justification. The Christian's justification depends not upon his justness—righteousness—but upon his faith. So here his sanctification is not his own holiness; but the holiness of Christ accredited to him because of his relation to Christ.

The adjective, sanctified, also used nominally, saints, means, first, consecrated or set apart to a sacred service. It is used of a great many inanimate things. A "holy place" is spoken of in Mat. 24, 15. "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place—" The word is used with this meaning by the angel also, who said to Moses; "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Acts 7, 33. That is, a consecrated place; a place, for an occasion, or for all time, dedicated to some sacred object. So the temple is holy. Acts 6, 13. 21, 28. 1 Cor. 3, 17.

And in no one of these cases does the word attribute any moral quality to the object qualified. It means not holy, but dedicated. In other cases the object to which this word refers is absolutely wicked. "Then the devil taketh him into the holy city." Mat. 4, 5. But Jerusalem was a very wicked city. So wicked that Christ wept over it. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Mat. 23, 37-38.

But in its usual sense this adjective involves moral excellence, though not perfection. It is so used of moral beings. The plural, also, is frequently used nominally, as a synonym for Christians. In this case our English Bible has "saints." So it is frequently used in Acts: 9, 13, 32, 41. 26, 10. By this name, saints, Paul addresses the Roman Christians; 1, 7. A careful study of his letter reveals the fact that these Christians were not perfect. He calls the Corinthian Christians saints. 1 Cor. 1, 2. 11 Cor. 1, 1. But these saints were far from being holy, if we may judge from the

severe rebukes to which Paul subjects them in these very letters in which he calls them saints. One text will show this. "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife." 1 Cor. 5, 1. The word is used in a similar way of other godly persons: as, the apostles and the prophets, the Jews and godly women. Sarah in particular being mentioned. "For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror." 1 Peter 3, 5-6. But Sarah laughed at the words of the angel, and then lied about it. Gen. 18, 10, 15.

Another meaning of this adjective is, "holy." It has this meaning when referring to the Word of God. "So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good." Rom. 7, 12. It is so used of God, John 17, 11; and of Christ. "Wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." Luke 1, 35. The use of this word in connection with the Holy Spirit is too

apparent to need comment. So also angels are called holy. "And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Rev. 14, 10. The word "holy" is used also in connection with men. "But like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1, 15-16. It is also used to express the condition into which men are finally to come. "Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before him: if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard." Col. 1, 22-23. After Christians have proved by their life-long continuance in the faith of the Gospel that they are really children of God, and by that same perseverance have been purified, then they shall be presented unto God "holy."

Let us now attempt a definition of sanctification, which we will proceed to justify. Sanctification is both a process and a state. As a process, it begins in regeneration, is carried forward by divine agencies, and ends in

holiness. As a state, it is that holiness in which the process culminates.

Sanctification is a process. This is seen in the use of the present tense, in Heb. 2, 11. "For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." A better rendering would be: "He that is sanctifying and they that are being sanctified." The verb is the present tense in both cases, and denotes continued action. In like manner, Heb. 10, 14, has the progressive tense. "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." A better rendering of this verse would be: "For by one offering he hath perfected continuously them that are being sanctified." This gives the real meaning of the passage. The expression "hath perfected" refers to the accomplished work of Christ. The phrase "continuously" refers to the application of that accomplished sacrifice to men, all through their lives. When, at evening, we confess the sins of the day, and seek for pardon, it is not necessary that Christ should be crucified for us again as an expiatory sacrifice. He has been sacrificed once for all; and because of the greatness of the sacrifice it is efficacious for us continuously, as we appropriate it.

Christians are being sanctified. The work is not yet complete. In 1 Thes. 5, 23, Paul says: "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly." These Thessalonian saints were in the way of sanctification; but had not yet reached the goal. The process had begun within them; but had not yet worked out their perfect holiness. This corresponds with the facts of Christian experience. No one is perfect. No one is holy in the sense that he is perfect. There are no saints, and never were, if Bible history and the history of religion can be depended upon; unless by saints is meant imperfect, but godly men and women. If we accept this definition, then Paul was a saint, for all that thorn of his; then Peter was a saint, if he did deny his Lord; then the Corinthian Christians were properly called saints by Paul, if there was fornication among them. In short wherever the word Christian can be used with propriety, there the word saint may be used. And as there are Christians, some better, some worse, so some saints are more saintly than others; and all saints are more saintly as they are purified by the process of sanctification through which they are passing.

The process of sanctification begins in re-

generation. Sanctification is a part of God's purpose in his election of the Christian ; and it is placed by Paul side by side with the adoption of sons. "Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love : having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." Eph. 1, 4-6. When the adoption has taken place, and the sonship begins, then the process of becoming holy begins. Moreover, sanctification is accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. "By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb. 10, 10. "Hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." v. 29. It is the sacrifice of Jesus that makes regeneration possible. Faith is the medium by which the sacrifice of Christ is appropriated unto sanctification. "That they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are

sanctified by faith in me." Acts 26, 18. Faith is also the medium by which the sacrifice of Christ is appropriated unto regeneration. In this text Paul again brings the terms commonly used to express the change called regeneration into close connection with the expression, "them that are sanctified," saying that those who are regenerate have an inheritance with them. Not in Heaven only, but as soon as regeneration takes place; for by regeneration the process of sanctification is entered upon.

This process is carried forward by divine agencies. It is the work of God. "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly." 1 Thes. 5, 23. It is Christ through whom men are sanctified. "Sanctified in Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. 1, 2. The Holy Spirit is the immediate agent, so that the process is called "sanctification of the Spirit." 11 Thes. 2, 13. 1 Pet. 1, 2. The Spirit works through the truth of God, through which Christ prayed that Christians might be sanctified. John 17, 17. These agencies work in connection with the providence of God in sustaining the soul as it seeks to surmount all evil and suffering, and to hold itself close to its determination to "fight the good fight of

faith." Sanctification begins in simple consecration to God. It is a natural law that a man becomes like the ideal to which he consecrates himself, like the service to which he dedicates himself. If that ideal and service are noble, the man will be gradually ennobled; if they are degrading, he will be gradually degraded. The word sanctify determines that the ideal and service shall be noble—even sacred. He who has taken Jesus Christ as his ideal will slowly but certainly have Christ formed within him. He who serves in holy offices will become holy. The soul that meets all temptation with prayer and with courage will find temptation more and more easily overcome, as the Spirit of God abides more continually within. The soul that so trusts in God as to cause all that life can bring to act as a refiner's fire, will become more refined—more holy—every day. In the end, even the human body, through which so much temptation and trial have come, will be refined away; and the spiritual body will take its place, and the long process will be ended.

And the process will be ended in holiness. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto

sanctification, and the end eternal life." Rom. 6, 22. Here the Christian enters the state of sanctification, at the end of the process. Here is the goal of all Christian endeavor. Here is the victory for which Paul fought, and the goal for which he ran. Here is the reward for all the stern wakefulness of a long life of constant vigilance. That men might arrive here, Christ said, "Watch and pray." "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13, 37. This is why he prayed his Father to keep his children from the evil one. That they might arrive here is why his soul cried out under the awful constraints and sufferings of his earthly life and death. Holiness! What has it cost? How much more than man could pay? But God will freely give holiness to the man who for holiness will give all he has. The soul that realizes its sin and abhors it, pants for this goal. But he who thinks he has already reached this goal, poor man, is simply blind to his own heart, and blind to the real glories of the perfect state. He slows his pace; he comes to a walk; he sits down to fan himself and to smile with sanctimonious pity upon poor, simple Paul, as he runs panting past, pushing

toward the goal that the man with the fan and the smile has NOT reached.

Here is the reality in anticipation of which God justifies imperfect men, upon the ground that they have begun the process that, according to his foreknowledge and election, will certainly end in perfection of character. Christ's righteousness is imputed to men while they are yet very imperfect, and they are considered and treated as if they were perfect. The justice of this may easily be seen. God knows that whoever is born of him will be perfect in the end of the process of discipline upon which he has entered. Upon this ground he gives man the advantage of his favor and of his fatherhood, while man is yet in a condition of soul that is not congenial to perfect holiness.

But here at the end of the process, at the end of life, at the dawn of endless day, God welcomes the soul for its own sake. Before, he has welcomed the soul for Christ's sake. All along the crooked path of life the soul has been a son of God by adoption. With each succeeding victory over sin he has become a little more a son of God by nature. Now the adoption has given place to sonship by nature. The holiness of the soul makes it kindred with God.

At last! at last, the soul has attained that "sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12, 14.

The whole subject, Christian growth, ends here. Indeed the process of sanctification is the process of Christian growth. The Christian growing, is the Christian becoming holy. He begins his life in regeneration; and there he enters the process of becoming holy. The Word of God, the church, truth, faith, the spirit of missions, prayer, the Holy Spirit and perseverance—all are as essential to sanctification as they are to Christian growth. And all are essential to both. The provisions that God has made for perfecting the Christian are marvelously complete. And with marvelous wisdom they have been adapted to the understanding of all who will give them due attention. This may men do!

And now we have come to the end of our task. If no other good has been accomplished, the author has learned something of the blessing that comes from service in sacred things. The many weeks and months spent in close and joyful study of God's Word have been weeks and months of running toward the goal. That goal would seem farther away today than

when the first line was written, were it not for the assurance that the God of all grace is nearer. The human heart is more sinful than any of us think. That is because we are human and cannot see what is beyond the range of our vision. Our appreciation of sin is the measure of our holiness. Holiness is light; in proportion to its degree in the soul does the soul appreciate the darkness that is there. Holiness is vision; in proportion to its power in the soul does the soul discover in itself the innumerable lurking places of its sin. It is inevitably the case that as the soul grows in holiness it will grow in self-aborrence.

Is this right? As the soul becomes holier, is it not deserving of more, rather than of less, respect? It certainly must be so. And yet this growing self-aborrence is a fact of Christian experience; and it is right. The reason is, not that the soul is less worthy in God's sight; but that, as it becomes holier, its abhorrence of sin becomes so much greater that its own sin, though less, seems more or worse. There must be, however, a respect on the part of each for the growing holiness of his own soul. In shame and in disgrace the old nature is giving way. It once was the soul's

self ; then it lost that place, and became only the soul's companion ; then the soul began to fear this old nature ; then the soul found this old nature to be its enemy ; then a devil ; then a fiend, fighting every inch of ground he yielded ; but yielding, yielding—death is conquered ; the soul, free and holy, “ is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers : the snare is broken, and we are escaped.” No more self-aborrent, the nightmare of sin and of death forever past, the Christian awakens in the morning of the resurrection in the likeness of his Saviour.

INDEXES

ANALYTICAL INDEX.

	PAGE
CHRISTIAN GROWTH.	
1. The world disappointed in Christians.....	23
2. This disappointment due to a misapprehension.....	24
I. The Christian grows.....	25
1. Appears from the nature of Christianity and of the Christian	25
a. The fundamental principle of Christianity.....	25
b. The Christian is seeking to become like Christ..	26
2. Appears from the facts of Christian experience.....	27
a. Comparison of the present and the past.....	27
b. Periods of worldliness may lead to growth.....	28
c. Feeling not a sufficient test of Christian growth	29
d. Should be tested by knowledge, faith, power in prayer, peace and grace.....	31
3. Appears from the New Testament.....	33
a. Texts that teach Christian growth directly. Phil. 3, 12-14. 1 Pet. 2, 1-5. Jude 20-21. 1 John 3, 2. John 15, 2. 11 Pet. 3, 18	33
b. Exhortations showing the imperfection of Chris- tians. Mat. 16, 23.. 26, 73-75. Rom. 7, 22-23. 8, 22-23. James 3, 2. 1 John 1, 8-10.....	35
c. Exhortations showing that Christians are ex- pected to grow. Mat. 26, 41. 1 Cor. 3, 1-3. Heb. 12, 1-2.....	37
d. The doctrine of sanctification proves that the Christian grows. 1 Thes. 4, 3-4. 5, 23. 11 Cor. 7, 1.....	38
II. The manner of Christian growth.....	39
1. It is gradual.....	39
a. It requires time.....	39
b. Is by minute increments. Eph. 2, 20-21.....	39
2. It is spontaneous.....	40

III. The means of Christian growth.....	41
1. God the primary means.....	41
a. In vegetable life.....	41
b. In animal life.....	41
c. In man. Heb. 13, 20-21.....	42
2. Christian activity the secondary means.....	43
a. Study of the Bible. Luke 11, 28.....	43
b. Perseverance. Col. 2, 18-19.....	43
c. Faith in the help of God. II Cor. 12, 9.....	44
d. Use of the church. Eph. 4, 11-13.....	44
1. No Christian is perfect in this life I John 1, 8-10...	45
2. Should not expect too much of Christians.....	45
3. Should not neglect the means of grace.....	46
4. The secret of the Christian life.....	46

REGENERATION.

1. Regeneration a figurative term.....	48
2. Defined.....	49
I. Regeneration is a change in the soul.....	49
1. Expect spiritual results.....	49
a. Physical results will often follow.....	49
b. The change is spiritual. John 3, 5-6. I Cor. 2, 10-12.....	50
2. The mystery of the change.....	51
a. No greater than in other forms of life.....	51
b. We may seek to understand it.....	51
3. The change is fundamental.....	52
a. A new creature. II Cor. 5, 17. Eph. 4, 20-24...	52
b. Alive from the dead. John 5, 24. Rom. 6, 13...	52
c. Free from bondage. Rom. 6, 17. I Pet. 2, 16....	53
d. Partakers of the divine nature. II Cor. 3, 18. Heb. 12, 10. I John 3, 2.....	53
II. This change brings the soul into sympathy with God...	54
1. Fellowship of suffering and joy. John 14, 23.....	54
2. This sympathy is of the closest type.....	55
a. Sons and heirs of God. John 1, 12. Rom. 8, 14-17. I John 3, 1.....	55
b. Firstfruits of God. James 1, 18. Rev. 14, 4.....	56

c. Are God's delight.....	56
3. This sympathy will continue forever.....	56
a. Is everlasting life. John 3, 16. 1 Pet. 1, 3-5, 23. John 10, 27-29, 17, 11-12. Jude 1.....	56
b. Possible exception. Heb. 10, 26-27.....	57
III. How regeneration is accomplished.....	58
1. God the Father begins the work.....	58
a. Could not begin with man. John 6, 44.....	58
b. A work of mercy and of grace. Rom. 9, 16. 6, 19. John 1, 13.....	59
2. The Son makes it possible.....	59
a. The Revealer.....	59
b. Nature not a sufficient revelation.....	60
c. The work of Jesus. John 1, 14, 14, 6. James 1, 18. Mat. 20, 28. Gal. 3, 13. Rom. 3, 22-26. 5, 8. Col. 1, 19 seq. Heb. 9.....	60
3. The Holy Spirit perpetuates it.....	61
a. The Illuminator. John 14, 16-17, 26. 15, 26. Acts 2, 33.....	62
b. Brings the soul and truth together. Titus 3, 4-5.....	63
4. Man co-operates with God.....	64
a. By faith. John 1, 12. 3, 18.....	64
b. By repentance. Acts 2, 37-38.....	64
c. By baptism. Mark 16, 16. Acts 10, 47-48. 16, 30-33. John 3, 5. 1 Pet. 3, 20-21.....	65
5. Recapitulation	65
IV. Must be experienced by every one who escapes God's continued displeasure.....	66
1. New Testament statement. John 3, 3.....	66
2. So in the nature of the case.....	66
a. God is continually displeased with those who are not in sympathy with him.....	66
b. Unregenerate men are not in sympathy with God	68
c. This displeasure continues until regeneration takes place.....	69

d. "Ye must be born again."	70
Recapitulation	70
THE LAW AND ITS RELATION TO THE GOSPEL.	
1. The thunders of Sinai	71
2. Do right or be right ?	72
3. The key to the subject is progress	72
I. The nature and the purpose of the Law	72
1. The nature of the Law	73
a. It is good. Rom. 7, 12	73
b. It is rudimental Gal. 4, 1-4. Col. 2, 8-20	74
c. It is intermediate. Gal. 3, 19, 23-25	74
d. It is condemnatory. Gal. 5, 3. 3, 10, 12. Heb. 7, 16 Rom. 5, 12	75
e. It enslaves men	76
2. The purpose of the law	77
a. To convince of sin. Gal. 2, 16. Rom. 3, 19. 4, 15. 5, 13, 20. 7, 7-16	77
b. To bring to Jesus. Rom. 10, 4	78
II. Texts that seem to set aside or to supersede the law con- sidered	78
1. Referring to the ceremonial law	78
a. Clean and unclean. Acts 10, 9-15	78
b. Circumcision. 1 Cor. 7, 19	79
c. Meat offered to idols. 1 Cor. 10, 27-30	79
d. "Blotted Out," "Nailed to the Cross," &c. Col. 2	80
2. Referring to the Mosaic and Levitical economy	81
a. The Woman and her husband. Rom. 7, 1-4	81
b. Other texts. Gal. 2, 18, 19. 3, 3. ch. 4. Eph. 2 Heb. 8.	82
3. The Law Jewish	84
a. Three texts. Rom. 3, 1-2. 9, 4-5. Eph. 2, 11-12	84
b. The council at Jerusalem. Acts 15	85
4. Referring to a change of law	86
a. The woman at the well. John 4	86
b. New patch, old garment. Mat. 9. Mark 2. Luke 5	86

c. New Covenant. 11 Cor. 3, 4-11.....	86
d. Other texts. John 13, 34. 11 Cor. 3, 6. Heb. 8, 7-9. 1 John 2, 8.....	87
5. Contrasting the old and the new law.....	88
a. Commandment, love. 1 John 2. 9 10. 1 Cor. 13.	
b. Bondage, liberty. Gal. 5, 1. James 1, 25. 2, 12.	89
c. Perfect obedience, faith. John 3, 16, 18 5, 24. 6, 40, 47. 20, 31 Rom. 4, 4-16. Gal. 2, 16. 3, 1-6.	89
d. Death, life. Rom. 8, 2.....	90
6. Referring to a change of administration.....	90
a. Parable of the vineyard. Mat. 21. Mark 12. Luke 20.....	90
b. Parable of the great supper. Mat. 22. Luke 14	91
c. Neither Jew nor Gentile. Rom. 10, 12-13. 1 Cor. 12, 13. Gal. 3, 28. Eph. 2, 11-22 Col. 3, 11...	91
III. Christ's relation to the Law.....	92
1. He is the judge.....	92
a. He discriminated between the real law and the traditions of men.....	92
b. He discriminated between true and false obedi- ence. John 14, 23. Mat. 7, 12. 12, 1-13. 19, 17-22. 23, 4-36. Mark 10, 17-22. 12, 30-34.....	93
2. He fulfilled the Law.....	94
a. By fulfilling the Messianic prophecies. Mat 8, 17. Luke 4, 17-21. 7, 18 seq. Gal. 3, 19 seq.....	94
b. By embodying the types and shadows. Col. 2, 16-17. Heb. 1, 1-4. 4, 14-5, 10. 7, 11-10, 18.	95
c. By obeying it. Mat. 8, 4. 23, 1-3.....	96
3. He revealed the true principle of religion, love.....	97
a. The race had lost the principle.....	97
b. Christ restored it. John 13, 34 15, 12. 11 Cor. 3	98
1. God's providence in the history of religion.....	99
2. The life of the godly in Jesus is large, full, free.....	99
3. The reign of the new law.....	100

THE CHURCHES.

1. Are the churches essential to Christian growth?....	101
2. Kingdom growth.....	101
3. Evils in the churches.....	102

I. The churches a part of the Gospel plan.....	103
1. Jesus said he would build a church.....	103
a. Mat. 16, 18.....	103
b. Mat. 18, 17.....	103
2. Jesus declared the foundation principle of the churches.....	104
a. Deity of Jesus, revealed, declared. Mat. 16, 13-20	104
b. Generalization.....	106
3. Jesus provided for the completion of the organization of the churches.....	107
a. Peter and the apostles given authority.....	107
b. The word church. Acts 19, 32-41. 8, 1. 9, 31. Eph. 1, 22-23. 3, 10. 5, 23-32. Col. 1, 18-24....	107
c. Churches evidently a part of the Gospel plan....	108
4. This was an important part of the plan seen by the thoroughness of the organization.....	108
a. Constitution was apostolic teaching. Mat. 16, 19. Acts 2, 42.....	109
b. Officers. Acts 20, 17, 28. Titus 1, 7, 5. Rom. 16, 1. Eph. 6, 21. Phil. 1, 1.....	109
c. Duties of officers, 1 Tim. 3.....	110
d. Apostolic estimate.....	111
II. The churches the great evangelizing agency.....	112
1. Gospel always been in the care of the churches.....	112
a. Jesus brought it, and committed it to the apostles	112
b. The apostles adjured the churches to keep their teachings pure. Mat. 18, 17. 11 Cor. 6, 14-18. 11 Thes. 3, 6. Rom. 16, 17. 1 Tim. 6, 20-21....	112
c. The guardianship of the early churches.....	114
d. The churches must be the guardian of the Bible now	115
e. Because the unregenerate cannot understand it. 1 Cor. 2, 11-12.....	116
f. The churches the home of the Bible.....	117
2. The proclamation of the Gospel intrusted to the churches.....	117
a. Public worship maintained.....	118
b. Sunday schools.....	118

c. Missionary enterprises.....	119
d. A great heritage.....	119
III. The relation of Jesus to the church.....	120
1. The head of the body.....	120
a. Texts. 1 Cor. 12, 27. Eph 1, 22-23. Col. 1, 18...	120
b. A close relation.....	120
2. He loves the church.....	120
a. Eph. 5, 25-27.....	120
b. 11 Cor. 2, 2.....	121
3. The kingdom-Christian's place.....	121
IV. The ordinances have been intrusted to the churches...	121
1. Baptism	121
a. Who are the qualified for? Mat. 28, 19. Mark 16, 15-16. Acts 2, 37-38. 8, 12-13.....	121
b. The door into the church. 1 Cor. 12, 13, 27. Rom. 6, 3.....	122
c. Is a symbol. Rom. 6, 3-4. Col. 2, 12.....	123
d. Whoever would be baptized must join the church.....	123
2. The Lord's supper.....	124
a. Belongs to the church. Acts 2, 41-42. 1 Cor. 10, 16-22. 11, 18-34.....	124
b. Is a symbol.....	125
c. Is a communion.....	125
3. Importance of the ordinances.....	126
The churches essential to the largest Christian growth...	127

LOYALTY TO TRUTH.

1. Truth is unchangeable and eternal.....	128
2. The truth in its fulness is with God.....	128
I. Loyalty to truth a condition of the soul.....	129
1. Not a mode of life.....	129
2. An inward condition.....	129
II. Loyalty to truth involves all the faculties of the soul...	130
1. Love.....	130
2. Intellect.....	130
a. Intuition of truth in general.....	130
b. Conscious effort to know truth.....	131

3. Conscience.....	131
4. Will.....	132
5. Recapitulation.....	132
III. Loyalty to truth manifests itself in obedience.....	132
1. In the attempt to know truth.....	132
a. To know absolute truth.....	132
b. To know practical truth.....	133
c. Application of the principle.....	135
2. In the attempt to do the truth.....	135
a. Exactly as one understands it.....	135
b. The point of departure.....	136
c. Application of the principle.....	137
IV. Loyalty to the truth essential to the development of Christian character.....	137
1. Jesus the Truth. John 14, 6. 19, 37.....	137
2. The Holy Spirit the spirit of truth.....	138
a. The Revealer.....	138
b. The Spirit of truth. John 14, 16. 15, 26. 16, 13. 1 John 5, 7.....	138
3. Proof from biography.....	139
1. Condition of soul.....	140
2. Obedience results.....	140
3. Essential to Christian growth.....	141

FAITH.

Faith essential to Christian growth.....	142
I. Faith defined and described.....	142
1. Confidence in the reliability of a person or thing.....	143
a. A servant, Paul, Phillip and others.....	143
b. Primarily of God. John 8, 31-32. 11, 27. 14, 10.....	144
c. Confidence in the reliability of a thing.....	145
d. Illustration.....	145
2. Different degrees of faith—growth.....	147
a. New Testament. Luke 17, 5. 11 Thes. 1, 3.....	147
b. Basis of growth, resurrection of Jesus and power of God.....	147
3. Relation of faith to other things.....	147
a. To sin. Rom. 14, 23.....	148

b. To the Gospel. Acts 13, 8. II Cor. 13, 5.....	148
c. To love. I Cor. 13, 2.....	148
d. To righteousness. Rom. 4, 3. John 6, 29.....	148
II. What faith secures.....	149
1. The favor of God.....	149
a. Generic references. Rom. 5, 2. Heb. 11, 6.....	149
b. Seen in propitiation. Rom. 3, 25.....	150
c. Seen in justification. Acts 13, 39. Gal. 2, 16. John 16, 27.....	150
d. Seen in the favor of Jesus. John 11, 40. 16, 8.....	151
e. Seen in the favor of the Holy Spirit. John 7, 39.....	151
2. Salvation. Eph. 2, 8.....	152
a. A condition of the soul. Acts 15, 19.....	152
b. Forgiveness of sin. Acts 10, 43.....	152
c. Righteousness. Rom. 1, 17.....	152
3. Healing.....	152
a. In the early church. Mat. 8, 13. 9, 20-29. Mark 5, 34. Luke 8, 48. Acts 3, 1-8. 14, 9. Gal. 3, 5. James 5, 15.....	152
b. Do these gifts continue.....	153
4. Spiritual blessings.....	155
a. Obedience. Rom. 1, 5. 16, 26.....	155
b. Joy and peace. Rom. 15, 13.....	155
c. Comfort. Rom. 1, 12.....	155
d. Christian growth. Jude 20.....	155
e. The indwelling Christ. Eph. 3, 17.....	155
f. The resurrection from the dead. John 6, 40.....	156
5. Effect of spiritual blessings on the body.....	156
III. What faith does.....	156
1. It works. Titus 3, 8. James 2, 17-20.....	156
2. Makes preaching profitable. Heb. 4, 2.....	156
3. Triumphs over the world. I John 5, 4. Heb. 11, 27 seq.....	157
IV. How can faith be secured ?.....	157
1. By means of testimony.....	157
a. Of men. Rom. 10, 14. John 1, 7. 20, 30-31. 4, 6-7, 16-18, 28-30, 39. Acts 4, 4.....	157
b. Of miracles. John 10, 25, 37-38. 6, 30. 7, 31.....	158
c. Of foretold events. John 14, 29.....	159

2. By means of truth John 8, 45-46.....	159
3. By seeking the glory of God. John 5, 44.....	159
4. By sight. John 20, 8, 29.....	160
V. All men ought to have faith.....	160
1. Owe it to themselves. Mark 16, 16. John 8, 24.....	160
2. Owe it to God. Mark 11, 22. Luke 22, 31-32.....	161
Recapitulation.....	161
THE IDENTITY OF MISSIONS AND CHRISTIANITY.	
1. The complaint.....	162
2. Purpose of the chapter.....	162
I. Identity seen in identity of object.....	163
1. The object of missions, to save from sin and ruin....	163
2. Object of Christianity, to save from sin and ruin.	
Mat. 18, 14. Luke 19, 10. John 10, 10.....	163
II. Seen in identity of plan.....	164
1. The first part of the plan of missions is to send the	
Gospel.....	164
a. A messenger sent.....	164
b. A message to take.....	165
c. A long way to go.....	165
2. The first part of the plan of Christianity is to send	
the Gospel.....	165
a. The "Missus." John 17, 18.....	165
b. The mission.....	166
c. A long way down.....	167
d. The identity.....	167
3. The second part of the plan of missions.....	167
4. The second part of the plan of Christianity.....	168
a. To begin the work before witnesses.....	168
b. To carry it forward by the apostles.....	168
c. To perpetuate it by converts.....	169
III. Seen in identity of spirit.....	170
1. The spirit of missions is love.....	170
a. The Mills movement.....	170
b. Carey.....	171
c. Judson.....	171
d. Ann Hasseltine.....	172

2. This only the Christian spirit.....	174
a. "God is love." 1 John 4, 8. John 3, 16. 15, 12-13. 17, 26.....	174
b. This love a principle.....	174
c. Recognizes the goodness of God.....	175
d. And the possibilities of men.....	175
e. Impels to activity.....	176
f. The true spirit of Christianity. Luke 2, 49.....	177
IV. Seen in the identity of their fields.....	177
1. The mission field is the world.....	177
2. The field of Christian activity is the world.....	178
a. Evident from the Savior's words. Mark 16, 15. John 17, 20.....	178
b. So the apostles thought.....	180
c. True love.....	181
1. The Christian is a missionary.....	181
2. Responsible for the redemption of the world.....	181
3. Because of relation to Christ.....	182
4. Controlled by the spirit of Jesus.....	183
5. Love seeks to save.....	183

CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE.

1. Story of Alexander Jean Boucher.....	184
a. Old soldier with dog.....	184
b. Boucher takes his violin.....	185
2. Who gives from impulse regrets.....	186
a. Gave too much to the old soldier.....	186
b. Gave too much to the Lord.....	186
I. The advantages of method in Christian beneficence.....	187
1. Prevention of waste.....	187
a. Saves reaction.....	187
b. Prevents giving to less worthy objects.....	189
c. Saves time of valuable workers.....	190
2. More money raised.....	191
a. Give a little at a time.....	191
b. Methodical giving increases desire to give.....	192
c. Gives a place in the church.....	192
d. Promotes knowledge of needs of the world.....	193

3. Gives the churches a basis of operation.....	193
a. The individual church.....	194
b. General missionary societies.....	195
4. Summary	195
II. Paul's plan. 1 Cor. 16, 2.....	195
1. Every Christian save.....	195
a. Dimes make dollars.....	195
b. Blessing to the giver.....	197
c. Train the children.....	197
2. Aside in store.....	197
a. Every church should have its regular time for taking offerings.....	198
b. Every Christian should have his place of deposit at home.....	198
3. Upon the First day of the week.....	199
a. Regularity	199
b. Advantages of the First day.....	200
4. As he has prospered.....	201
a. God does not require more than a Christian can do. Acts 8, 20.....	201
b. Christian stewardship. Luke 17, 10.....	202
c. Entitled to a frugal living. 1 Cor. 9, 9.....	203
III. Does accumulation of property comport with this plan? 203	
1. Should be in business for the Lord.....	203
a. An open question.....	203
b. The coin of Heaven.....	204
2. Invested wealth.....	205
Recapitulation	205

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The present agency of God in the world.....	207
I. A person.....	207
1. A comforter. John 14, 16.....	207
2. A teacher. John 14, 26.....	208
3. Carried forward the work of Jesus. John 16, 12-14.....	208
4. Controlled the apostles. Mat. 10, 20. Mark 13, 11.....	209
5. Personality not doubted.....	210
6. The Holy Spirit is a person.....	210

II. The Holy Spirit begot Jesus.....	210
1. Scripture statement. Mat. 1, 18, 20. Luke 1, 32, 35..	210
2. Who was the Father?.....	211
3. The voice at baptism and transfiguration, voice of Spirit?.....	212
III. The exalted and glorified Jesus.....	212
1. Implied in the words of Jesus. John 14, 16-18.....	212
2. Paul understood this. II Cor. 3, 17, 18.....	213
3. Conclusion evident.....	213
IV. The deity of the Holy Spirit.....	213
1. He begot Jesus.....	213
a. Immanuel. Mat. 1, 23.....	213
b. Born of God. Luke 1, 35.....	213
2. The Spirit of God. Luke 3, 22. Mat. 3, 16, 12, 27..	214
3. The Spirit of the Father. Mat. 10, 20. Mark 13, 11..	215
1. Recapitulation.....	215
2. Danger of Polytheism. John 5, 44. 17, 3. I Cor. 8,	
4. II Tim. 1, 17.....	216

PRAYER.

1. Sense of need	218
2. Men become careless as they become successful.....	219
3. All men dependent upon God.....	219
4. Men are short-sighted who cease to pray.....	219
5. Our knowledge does not reach beyond God.....	220
I. The condition of the soul in prayer.....	220
1. Rest and receptivity.....	220
a. Filial regard. Mat. 6, 9.....	221
b. Adoration. Mat. 6, 9.....	221
c. Humility. Mat. 6, 5-6. Luke 18, 10-14.....	221
d. Forgiveness. Mat. 6, 12, 14-15. Mark 11, 25.....	222
e. Sincerity. Ps. 139, 23. Mark 12, 40.....	223
f. Faith. Heb. 11, 6. Mark 11, 24.....	224
g. Acquiescence in the divine will. Luke 22, 42..	224
h. Recapitulation.....	225
2. Activity and expenditure.....	225
a. Desire. Luke 22, 44. Rom. 8, 26. I Thes. 3, 10.	226
b. Direct appeal. Mat. 6, 7.....	226

c. Importunity. Luke 18, 7. 11, 5-18.....	227
d. Remark. Ex 3, 5.....	228
II. Time and place of prayer.....	228
1. Time.....	228
a. Appointed hour. Acts 3, 1.....	228
b. All times. Eph. 6, 18.....	230
c. Without ceasing. 1 Thes. 5, 17. Col. 4, 2.....	231
2. Place of prayer.....	231
a. Public. Luke 3, 21, 23, 34, 45. Mat. 21, 13. Acts 16, 13.....	231
b. Semi-public. Luke 9, 18, 28. Mat. 26, 36. John 18, 2. ch. 17. Acts 1, 14, 12, 12.....	232
c. Private. Mat. 14, 23. Mark 1, 35, 6, 46. Luke 6, 12, 5, 16, 11, 1. Mat. 6, 6. Acts 10, 9.....	233
d. Everywhere. 1 Tim. 2, 8.....	235
e. Broader command includes narrower.....	235
f. Creatures of time and place.....	235
g. Relation of spirit and time and place.....	236
III. Objects of prayer. Job 21, 15.....	236
1. Spiritual objects.....	236
a. Enemies. Mat. 5, 44.....	237
b. Forgiveness. Acts 8, 22. Luke 23, 34. 1 John 5, 16.....	237
c. Faith. Luke 22, 32, 17, 5.....	238
d. The Holy Spirit. Luke 11, 13. Acts 8, 15.....	238
e. Deliverance from suffering. James 5, 13. Mat. 6, 13, 26, 41. 11 Cor. 13, 7.....	239
f. The kingdom of God. Mat. 6, 10. 1 John 2, 15.....	240
g. Guidance. Acts 1, 24-25. Phil. 1, 9. Col. 1, 9. Eph. 1, 15-18.....	240
h. Utterance. Eph. 6, 18-19. Col. 4, 2-3.....	241
2. Physical objects of prayer.....	242
a. Food. Mat. 6, 11.....	242
b. Healing. James 5, 14-16.....	242
c. Deliverance. Mark 13, 18-19. Acts 12, 5. Rom. 15, 30-31. Phile. 22.....	243
3. Welfare of all men.....	243
a. Children. Mat. 19, 13.....	243

b. For Christians. John 17, 9, 20. Col. 1, 3.....	244
c. Each other. James 5, 16.....	255
d. Kings and officials. 1 Tim. 2, 1-2.....	244
e. All men. 1 Tim. 2, 1-2.....	245
4. Everything desired. Phil. 4, 6.....	245
The spiral stair.....	246

NECESSITY AND CERTAINTY OF PERSEVERANCE.

1. The safety of perseverance.....	247
2. Perseverance of saints.....	247
3. Christians must and will persevere.....	248
I. They must.....	248
1. The most serious obligation.....	248
2. Commands and exhortations of the New Testament.....	249
a. That teach this directly. John 15, 9. 1 Cor. 16, 13. Phil. 4, 1. Col. 4, 2. 11 Thes. 3, 13. 1 Tim. 6, 12. 11 Pet. 3, 17. Jude 20-21. Rev. 2, 25....	249
b. Based upon the second coming of Christ. Mark 13, 33-37. 11 Pet. 3, 10-14.....	250
c. Based upon the persistence of Satan. 1 Pet. 5, 8.	251
d. Based on hope of success. 1 Cor. 15, 58. 11 Pet. 1, 10.....	251
3. Obligation evident upon other grounds.....	252
a. Weakness of physical nature. Mat. 26, 41.....	252
b. "The flesh." Rom. 8, 12-13.....	254
4. Possible that a Christian may be lost.....	254
a. Perseverance necessary to salvation. Mat. 10, 22. 24, 13. 11 Tim. 2, 12. Rev. 2, 7, 11, 17, 26. 3, 5, 12, 21. 21, 7. Rom. 11, 22. Heb. 3, 6.....	255
b. Direction of perseverance. 1 John 2, 24-29.....	256
c. Lost by failure to abide in Christ. John 15, 4-6.....	256
d. May commit the unpardonable sin. Heb. 6, 4-6. Eph. 1, 18. 11 Tim. 1, 10. Heb. 10, 32, 26-27....	258
e. Lost by simple neglect. 1 Cor. 9, 26-27. Rev. 3, 11.	259
5. Recapitulation.....	260
II. Christians will persevere.....	260
1. Scripture statement. Luke 21, 18-19. Rom. 8, 23-25. Heb. 10, 39. 1 John 2, 19.....	260

2. The nature of salvation assures perseverance.....	262
a. Christians are dead to sin. Rom. 6, 1-4.....	262
b. Friendship with evil broken up.....	263
c. The heart is changed. Rom. 8, 35-39.....	264
d. Children of light. 1 Thes. 5, 4-6.....	266
e. Partakers of Christ. Heb. 3, 14.....	268
f. Children of God. 1 John 3, 1-6. 5, 4.....	268
g. Recapitulation.	
3. God's care assures perseverance.....	269
a. He has elected Christians. Mat. 24, 22. Rom. 11, 28-29. Phil. 2, 12-13.....	269
b. Is able and faithful to keep them. John 10, 27-29. 11 Tim. 1, 12. Jude 24-25. 1 Cor. 10, 13. 1 Thes. 5, 24.....	270
c. Jesus is interested in behalf of the Christian. John 17, 11, 15, 20. 1 Cor. 1, 6-8. 1 Thes. 3, 13. 11 Thes. 2, 16, 17.....	271
d. The Holy Spirit intercedes for Christians. Rom. 8, 26. 11 Cor. 1, 21-22. Eph. 1, 13.....	272
1. A Christian may be lost.....	273
2. A Christian will not be lost.....	273

SANCTIFICATION.

A misfortune to be dwarfed.....	274
I. Word study.....	274
1. The verb "to sanctify".....	275
a. Means to qualify, to fit, to legitimate. 1 Cor. 7, 14. Heb. 9, 13. 11 Tim. 2, 21.....	275
b. Means "to set apart to a sacred service." John 10, 36. 17, 19. Eph. 5, 25-27.....	277
c. Means "to revere." Mat. 6, 9.....	278
2. The noun "sanctification." a. The process of becoming holy. 1 Thes. 4, 3-4, 7... 278 b. Holiness. Rom. 6, 19, 22. 1 Cor. 1, 30-31..... 279	
3. The adjective "sanctified," "saints".....	280
a. Set apart to a sacred service. Mat. 24, 15. Acts 7, 33. 6, 13. 21, 28. 1 Cor. 3, 17. Mat. 4, 5. 23, 37-38.....	280

b. Of moral beings. Acts 9, 13, 32, 41. 26, 10. Rom. 1, 7. 1 Cor. 1, 2. 11 Cor. 1, 1. 1 Cor. 5, 1. 1 Pet. 3, 5-6. Gen. 18, 10, 15.....	281
c. Holy. Rom. 7, 12. John 17, 11. Luke 1, 35. Rev. 14, 10. 1 Pet. 1, 15-16. Col. 1, 22-23.....	282
II. Sanctification defined.....	283
1. Sanctification a process.....	284
a. Progressive. Heb. 2, 11. 10, 14. 1 Thes. 5, 23.....	284
b. Begins in regeneration. Eph. 1, 4-6. Heb. 10, 10, 29. Acts 26, 18.....	285
c. Carried forward by divine agencies. 1 Thes. 5, 23. 1 Cor. 1, 2. 11 Thes. 2, 13. 1 Pet. 1, 2. John 17, 17.....	287
d. Ends in holiness. Rom. 6, 22.....	288
2 Sanctification a state.....	289
a. The goal of Christian endeavor.....	289
b. The realization of hope.....	290
c. Holiness at last. Heb. 12, 14.....	290

CONCLUSION.

1. Christian growth ends here.....	291
2. Holiness begets self-aborrence.....	291
3. "Our soul is escaped".....	292

SCRIPTURE INDEX.

MATTHEW.	PAGE.	MATTHEW.	PAGE.
1, 18.....	210	18, 14.....	163
20.....	211	17.....	104, 113
23.....	213	19, 13.....	243
3, 16.....	214	17-22.....	94
4, 5.....	281	20, 28.....	61
5,	89	21,	90
44.....	237	13.....	232
6, 5-6.....	222	41.....	90
6.....	234	43.....	90
7.....	227	22,	91
9.....	221, 278	23, 1-3.....	97
10.....	240	4-36.....	94
11.....	242	37-38.....	281
12.....	223	24, 13.....	255
13.....	240	15.....	280
14-15.....	223	22.....	269
6, 27.....	42	26, 36.....	233
7, 12.....	94	41.....	37, 240, 252
8, 4.....	97	73-75.....	36
13.....	15	28, 19.....	122
17.....	95	MARK.	
9,	86	1, 35.....	234
20-29.....	152	2,	86
10, 20.....	209, 215	5, 34.....	152
22.....	255	6, 46.....	234
12, 1-13.....	94	10, 17-22.....	94
27.....	214	11, 22.....	161
14, 23.....	234	24.....	224
16, 13-20.....	105	25.....	223
18.....	103	12,	90
19.....	109	30-34.....	94
23.....	35	40.....	224

MARK.	PAGE.	JOHN.	PAGE.
13, 11.....	209, 215	1, 7.....	157
18-19.....	243	12.....	55, 64
33-37.....	250	13.....	59
37.....	289	14.....	61
16, 15-16.....	119, 122, 178	3, 3.....	66
16.....	65, 161	5-6.....	50
LUKE.		5.....	65
1, 32.....	211	16.....	54, 56, 89, 174
35.....	211, 214, 282	18.....	64
2, 49.....	177	4, 6-7.....	158
3, 21.....	231	16-18.....	158
22.....	214	28-30.....	158
4, 17-21.....	95	39.....	158
5,	86	5, 24.....	52
16.....	234	44.....	160, 216
6, 12.....	234	6, 29.....	149
7, 18.....	95	30.....	159
8, 48.....	152	40.....	89, 156
9, 18.....	233	44.....	58
28.....	233	47.....	90
11, 1.....	234	68.....	247
5-13.....	227	7, 31.....	159
13.....	239	39.....	151
28.....	43	8, 24.....	161
14,	91	31-32.....	144
17, 5.....	147, 238	45-46.....	159
10.....	202	10, 10.....	164
18, 7.....	227	25.....	159
10 14.....	222	27-29.....	57, 270
19, 10.....	163	36.....	277
20,	90	37-38.....	159
21, 18-19.....	260	11, 27.....	145
22, 31-32.....	161	40.....	151
32.....	238	13, 34.....	87, 98
42.....	225	14, 6.....	61, 137
44.....	226	10.....	145
23, 34.....	231, 238	16.....	139, 208
45.....	232	16-17.....	62

JOHN.	PAGE.	ACTS.	PAGE.
14, 16-18.....	212	2, 37-38.....	64, 122
23.....	55, 94	41-42.....	124
26.....	62, 208	42.....	109
29.....	159	3, 1.....	229
15, 2.....	35	1-8.....	153
4-6.....	257	4, 4.....	158
9.....	249	6, 13.....	280
12.....	98	21.....	280
12-13.....	174	28.....	280
26.....	62, 139	7, 33.....	280
16, 8.....	151	8, 1.....	108
12-14.....	209	12-13.....	122
13.....	139	15.....	239
27.....	151	20.....	201
17, 3.....	233 216	22.....	237
9.....	244	9, 13.....	281
11.....	272, 282	31.....	108
11-12.....	57	32.....	281
15.....	272	41.....	281
17.....	287	10, 9.....	234
18.....	166	9-15.....	79
19.....	277	43.....	152
20.....	179, 244, 272	47-48.....	65
26.....	174	12, 5.....	243
18, 2.....	233	12.....	233
5.....	89	13, 8.....	148
24.....	89	39.....	150
19, 37.....	137	14, 9.....	153
20, 8.....	160	15, 19.....	85 152
29.....	160	16, 13.....	232
30-31.....	157	30-33.....	65
31.....	90	19, 32-41.....	107
ACTS.		20, 17.....	109
1, 14.....	233	28.....	110
24-25.....	241	26, 10.....	281
2, 33.....	62	18.....	287

SCRIPTURE INDEX.

317

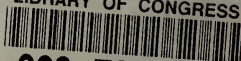
ROMANS.	PAGE.	ROMANS.	PAGE.
1, 5.....	155	10, 4.....	78
7.....	281	12-13.....	92
12.....	155	14.....	157
17.....	152	11, 22.....	256
3, 1-2.....	84	28-29.....	270
19.....	78	14, 23.....	148
22-26.....	61	15, 13.....	155
25.....	150	30-31.....	243
4, 3.....	149	16, 1.....	110
4-16.....	90	17.....	114
15.....	78	26.....	155
5, 2.....	150		
8.....	61	I CORINTHIANS.	
12.....	76	1, 2.....	281, 287
13.....	78	6 8.....	272
20.....	78	30-31.....	279
6, 1-4.....	262	2, 10-12.....	50
3.....	123	11-12.....	116
3-4.....	123	3, 1-3.....	37
13.....	52	17.....	280
17.....	53	5, 1.....	282
19.....	59, 279	7, 14.....	275
22.....	279, 289	19.....	79
7, 1-4.....	81	8, 4.....	216
7-16.....	78	9, 9.....	203
12.....	73, 282	26-27.....	260
22-23.....	36	10, 13.....	271
8,	83	16-22.....	125
2.....	90	27-30.....	80
12-13.....	254	11, 18 34.....	125
14-17.....	55	12, 13.....	92, 123
22-23.....	37	27.....	120, 123
26.....	226, 272	13,	98
23-25.....	261	2.....	148
35-39.....	266	15, 58.....	252
9, 4-5.....	84	16, 2.....	195
16.....	59	13.....	249

II CORINTHIANS.	PAGE.	EPHESIANS.	PAGE.
1, 1.....	281	1, 22-23.....	108, 120
21-22.....	272	2, 8	83
3, 4-11.....	98 87	8.....	152
6.....	88	11-12.....	85
17.....	213	11-22.....	92
18.....	54, 213	20-21.....	40
5, 17.....	52	3, 10.....	108
6, 14-18.....	113	17.....	156
7, 1.....	38	4, 11-13.....	44
11, 2.....	121	20-24.....	52
12, 9.....	44	5, 23-32.....	108
13, 5.....	148	25-27.....	121, 278
7.....	240	6, 18.....	231
		18-19.....	242
		21.....	110
GALATIANS.			
2, 16.....	77, 90, 151	PHILIPPIANS.	
18.....	83	1, 1.....	110
19.....	83	9.....	241
3, 1-6.....	90	2, 12-13.....	270
3.....	83	3, 12-14.....	33
5.....	153	4, 1.....	249
10.....	75	6.....	245
12.....	75		
13.....	61	COLOSSIANS.	
19.....	75, 95	1, 3.....	244
23-25.....	75	9.....	241
28.....	92	18.....	120
4, 1-4.....	83 74	18-24.....	108
5, 1.....	89	19.....	61
3.....	75	22-23.....	283
		2, 8-20.....	74
EPHESIANS.		12.....	123
1, 4-6.....	286	16-17.....	96
13.....	272	18-19.....	44
15-18.....	241	3, 11.....	92
18.....	158	4, 2.....	231, 249
		2-3.....	242

I THESSALONIANS. PAGE.		HEBREWS. PAGE	
3, 10.....	226	3, 6.....	256
13.....	272	14.....	268
4, 3-4.....	38, 279	4, 2.....	157
7.....	279	14—5, 10.....	96
5, 4-6.....	266	6, 4-6.....	258
17.....	231	7, 11—10, 18,.....	96
23.....	38, 285, 287	16.....	76
24.....	271	8,	83
II THESSALONIANS.		7-9.....	88
1, 3.....	147	9,	61
2, 13.....	287	13.....	276
16-17.....	272	10, 10.....	286
3, 6.....	114	14.....	284
13.....	249	26 27.....	57, 259
I TIMOTHY.		29.....	286
1, 17.....	216	32.....	258
2, 1-2.....	245	39.....	261
8.....	235	11, 6.....	150, 224
3,	110	27.....	157
6, 12.....	249	12, 1-2.....	38
20-21.....	114	10.....	54
II TIMOTHY.		14.....	291
1, 10.....	258	13, 20-21.....	43
12.....	271	JAMES.	
2, 12.....	255	1, 17.....	134
21.....	276	18.....	56, 61
TITUS.		25.....	89
1, 5.....	110	2, 12.....	89
7.....	110	17-18.....	156
3, 4-5.....	63	3, 2.....	37
8.....	156	5, 13.....	239
PHILEMON.		14-16.....	243
22.....	243	15.....	153
HEBREWS.		I PETER.	
1, 1-4.....	96	1, 2.....	287
2, 11.....	284	3-5.....	57

I PETER.	PAGE.	JUDE.	PAGE.
1, 15-16.....	283	1.....	57
23.....	57	20.....	155
2, 1-5.....	34	20-21.....	34, 249
16.....	53	24-25.....	271
3, 5-6.....	282	REVELATION.	
20-21.....	65	2, 7.....	255
5, 8.....	251	11.....	255
II PETER.		17.....	255
1, 10.....	252	25.....	249
3, 10-14.....	251	26.....	255
17.....	249	3, 5.....	255
18.....xviii, xix,	35	11.....	260
I JOHN.		12.....	256
1, 8-10.....37,	45	21.....	256
2, 8.....	88	14, 4.....	56
9-10.....	89	10.....	283
15.....	240	21, 7.....	256
19.....	261	GENESIS.	
24-29.....	257	18, 10-15.....	282
3, 1.....	56	EXODUS.	
1-6.....	269	3, 5.....	228
2.....35,	54	JOB.	
4, 8.....	174	21, 15.....	236
5, 4.....157,	269	PSALMS.	
7.....	139	124, 7.....	293
16.....	238	139, 23.....	224

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